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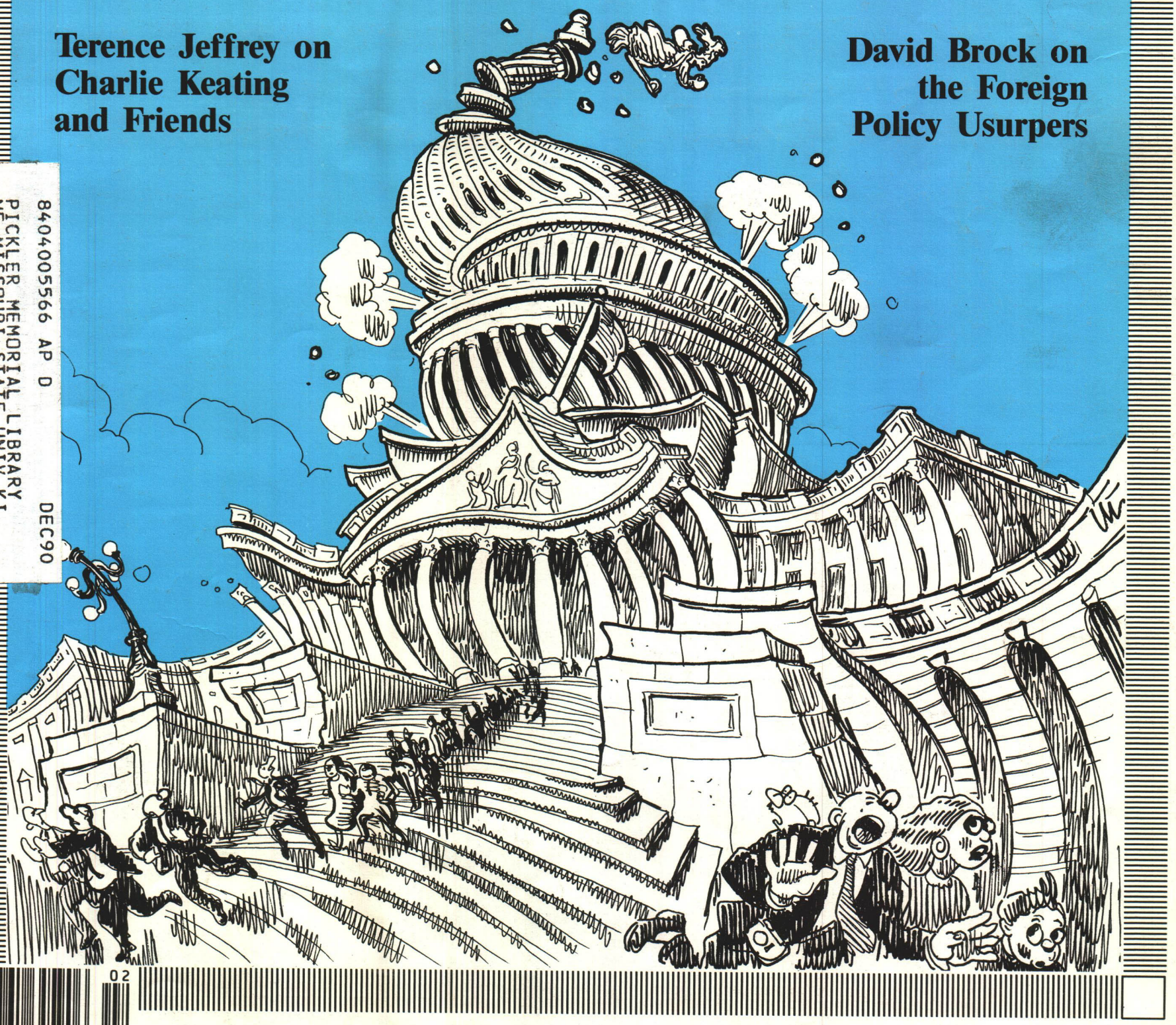

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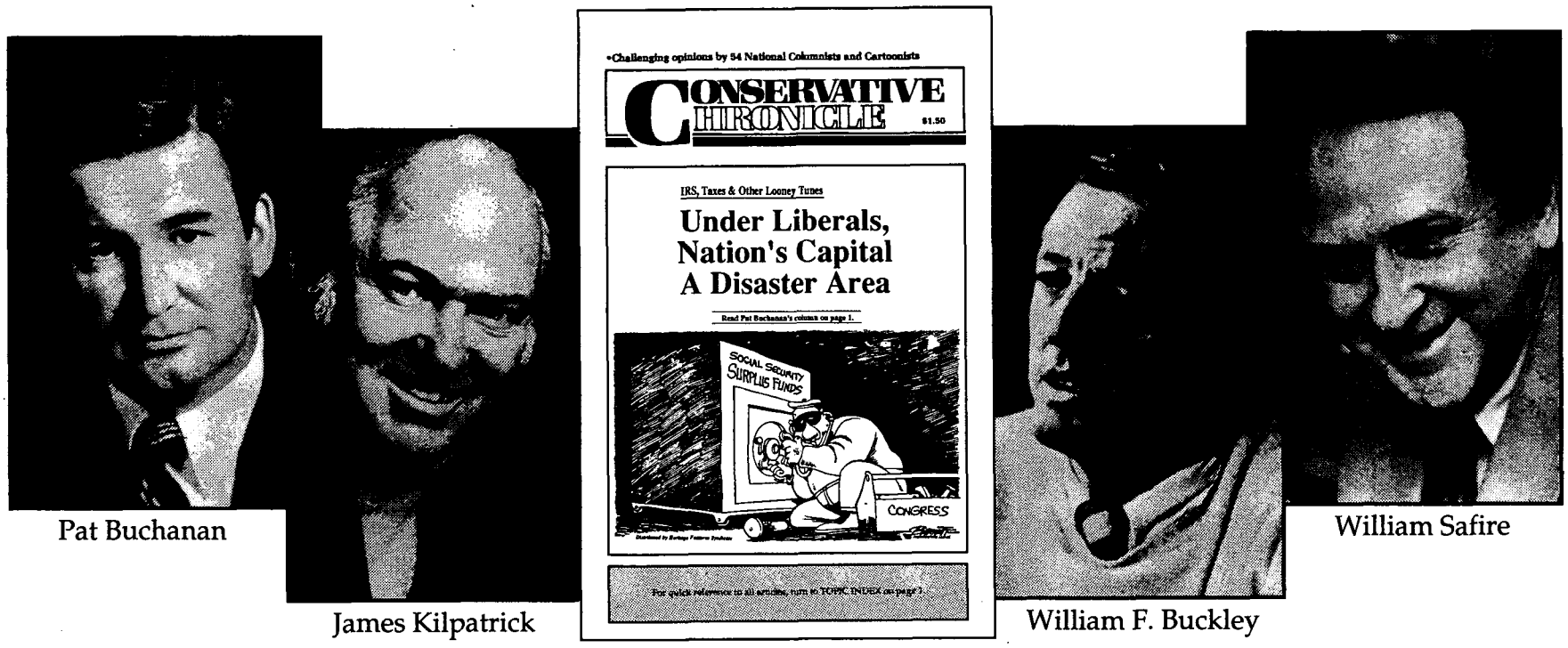
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"Land for Peace"

Can it solve the problems of the Middle East?

There has been much emphasis for years, intensified in recent months, on the "land for peace" formula to solve the long-simmering problems of the Middle East. Translating this slogan into plain English means that Israel should surrender Judea-Samaria (the "West Bank") and Gaza to the Arabs. They would establish a Palestinian state. Once that happened, it is thought that peace and tranquility would soon come to the troubled Middle East.

What are the facts?

■ The concept of "land for peace" is a totally new one in the history of the world. It was formulated for one specific purpose only, namely to persuade and pressure Israel to give up territories that it has administered since the Six-Day War of 1967. By its victory in that war, Israel wound up in possession of these territories. Contrary to what many are led to believe, the "West Bank," the focus of today's attention, had never been part of any Arab country. It was part of Palestine, a territorial unit that, by the Mandate of the League of Nations and in line with the Balfour Declaration, had been designated as a national home for the Jewish people.

■ Thus, while the concept of "land for peace" is a brand-new one, the concept that to the victor belong the spoils is as old as history itself and had really never been questioned before the days of the Israel-Arab conflict. Our own country, of course, following its Manifest Destiny, has benefited greatly and has consolidated its territory by applying this motto. But Israel followed a different path. From the day of victory in 1967, it waited for an offer of peace from the Arabs. But that offer never came. Instead, immediately following the war, the Arabs pronounced their three unalterable "no's:" no recognition, no negotiation, and no peace with Israel.

■ In 1977, President Sadat of Egypt traveled to Jerusalem and presented a peace plan to the Israeli government. The Israelis eagerly embraced his suggestion. In exchange for peace and normalization of relations with its neighbor, Israel returned to Egypt the vast Sinai peninsula, together with the city of Yamit; some of the most advanced military installations in the world; the port and naval installations of Sharm-el-Sheik, which safeguard Israel's access to its port of Eilat; and the oil fields that Israel had developed and which had made Israel self-sufficient in its energy requirements. And, of course, Israel also gave up the natural buffer against aggression that the Suez Canal and the strategic depth of the Sinai itself provided. It was a first in history. Never before in the chronicle of mankind had the victor returned conquered territory to the vanquished in order to attain peace.

■ One would expect that the concept of "land for peace" would work both ways. After all, should not the Arabs also make some territorial sacrifices for peace? Unfortunately, that is not the case. Every inch of land held by the Arabs is considered "holy Arab soil" and its possession by the "infidels" (Christians or Jews) is inadmissible, intolerable, a blasphemy and a case for "jihad" (holy war). No compromise, no concession is ever possible. The way the "Taba issue" was finally resolved further illustrates the Arab belief that the "land for peace" principle is basically a one-way street.

■ The "land for peace" formulation is now applied mostly to the Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and Gaza regions. Israel's foes, but also some of its friends, urge Israel to yield these regions to the Arabs, in exchange for "peace." But there is no peace, and no peace will come about by Israel's giving up this area of vital strategic importance to those who are its sworn enemies and who have declared over and over again that they wish to use this land as their launching pad for the final attempt at the destruction of Israel. The conflict in the area is not only between Israel and the "Palestinians." It is first of all between Israel and the Arab nations. With the single exception of Egypt, virtually all of them are still in a state of war with Israel.

To none of the Arab countries has the possibility ever occurred of *their* trading land for peace, for instance yielding the "West Bank" to Israel for the sake of peace. Not one of these countries has even hinted that they would make peace with Israel if Israel yielded the administered territories to the Arabs. There isn't even a gesture of accommodation, such as a lifting of the over 40-year-old Arab economic boycott against Israel, an apology for the odious slander that Zionism is Racism, or a discontinuation of the yearly charade in the United Nations, in which the Arab states attempt to expel Israel from that body. For the victor to yield land for peace to the vanquished is a new idea—who knows, it might even be a good one. But it surely would have to work both ways in order to be valid and effective.

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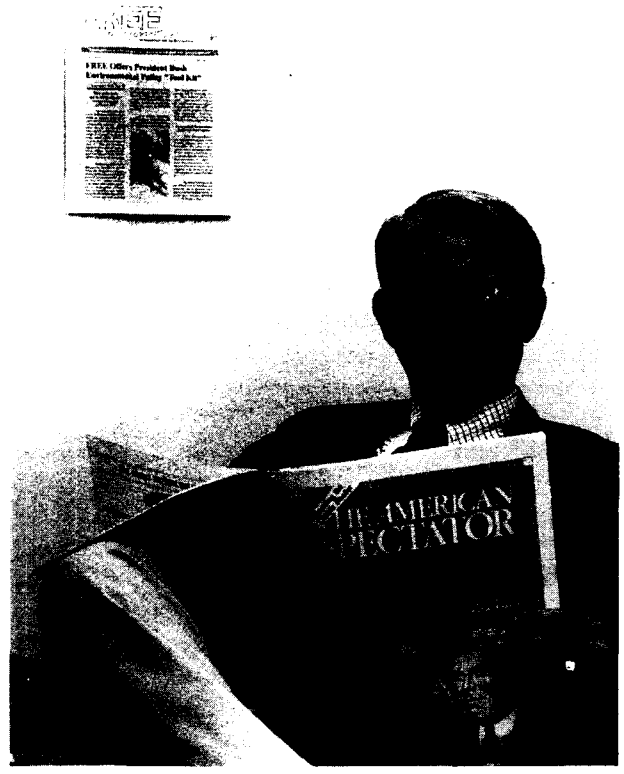

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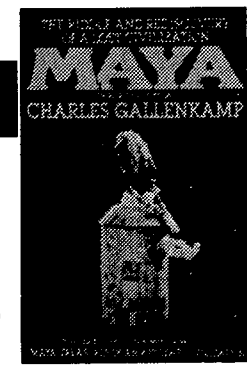

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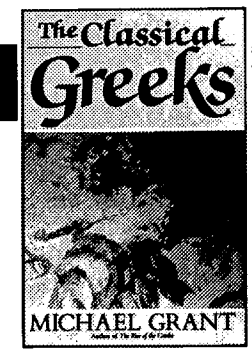

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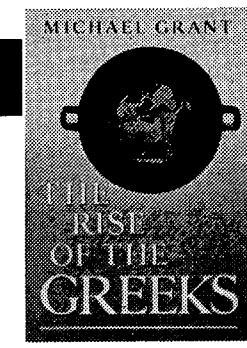

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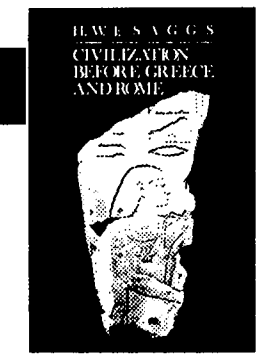

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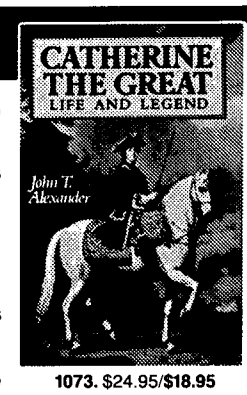

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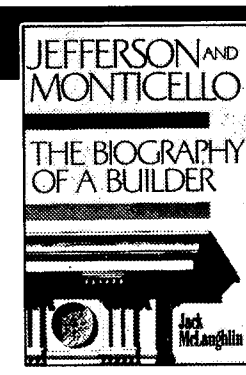

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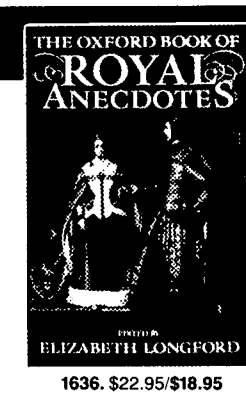

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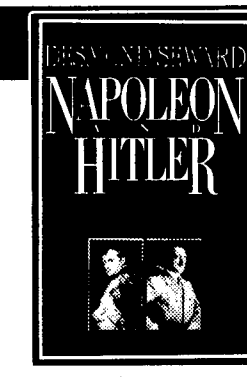

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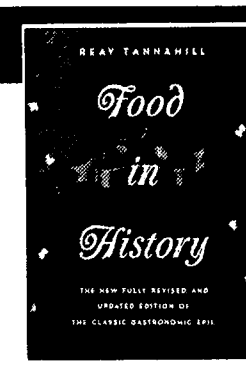

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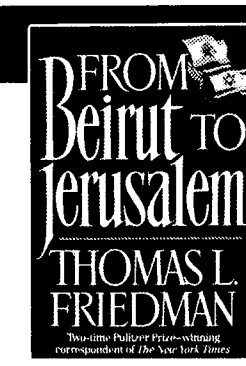

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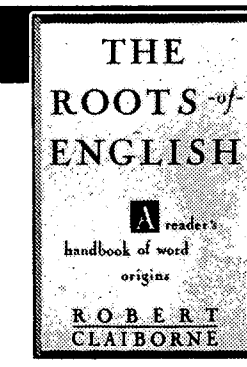

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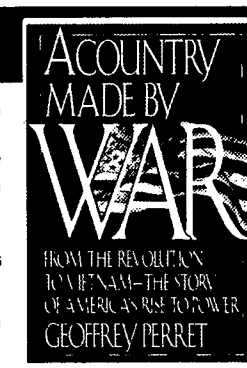

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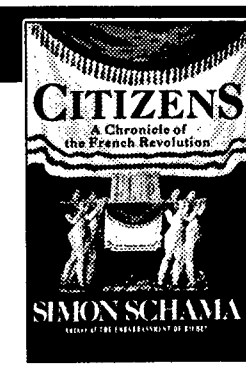

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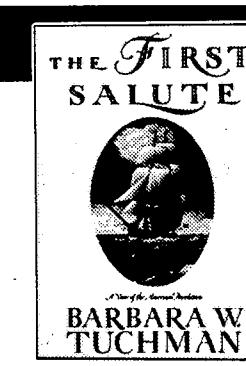

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

• December vanished and with it an entire decade: for Americans, one of the most prosperous in history; for Europeans, one of the most liberating; for Latin Americans, one of the most democratic. However, to our morbid friends, the liberal Democrats, it was "The Lost Decade"—that being the title of an understandably thin and doleful tract published by them. Equally doleful are the great lumbering Guernseys of the Republic's bovine intelligentsia. They have designated the 1980s "The Decade of Greed," though they betray no stirrings of self-denial. Have any of these pampered poseurs adopted bleak asceticism for themselves? Through the decade the pundits' incomes have increased apace with those of all other yuppies, and nowhere is it recorded that they have adopted any charitable interests other than their own bodily needs.

• In Moscow, the second session of the Congress of People's Deputies convened with a terse and unavailing debate over the Communist party's present power monopoly, which left the Soviet Union's greatest proponent of democracy, Andrei Sakharov, dead of a heart attack and its leading proponent of one-party rule, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, acclaimed *Time* magazine's Man of the Decade. One gets the impression that the 1960s youths now editing *Time* expect all Americans to be just like them—to wit, lifelong Members of the TV Audience. They cannot imagine Americans being active participants in world events, and when they see the emergence of a new world shaped by Ronald Reagan's Administration they rush out to honor the object of Reagan's foreign policy, rather than Reagan; that being the equivalent of honoring the AIDS virus rather than the successful AIDS researcher.

• At the vestibule of the Christmas season clerics let out a whoop over a Gallup Poll revealing that two of every three Americans declared Mr. Jesus Christ the historic figure they would most like to spend a day with. Second on the list was former President Abraham Lincoln, followed by Sr. Leonardo da Vinci, late of Florence, Italy, and Mr. John Wayne, the deceased actor who was wont to razz the editors of this fashionable magazine when we objected to Hollywood violence. Our objection was not actually to the depiction of violence but to the phoniness of it. Were a few actors regularly to die hideously whilst enacting their derring-do, we would have no objections. Mrs. Leona Helmsley received a stiff fine and four years in the hoosegow for evading taxes on, among other personal items, a $12.99 girdle. In Shanghai, China, a state-of-the-art urine detector nabbed Mr. Lor Eng Kiong as he indulged his secret vice in an apartment complex elevator; authorities fined him $900, and ordered him to sex education classes forever.

• The Capitol Hill S&L scandal is taking a toll. One of the suspect senators, the Hon. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), 75, canceled his Christmas Eve wedding with Miss Cathy Lee Pattiz, 49, the political neophyte, fearing that the unruly press and wildly incontinent paparazzi might muss Miss Pattiz's hair and press upon her hoop skirt. In West Hollywood, California, a leading light in the local homeless community, Mr. Kelly Gay, 32, was arrested for attempting to warm his dog in a laundromat's heavy-duty dryer; and, according to a press release from the office of House Speaker Thomas S. Foley (D-Wash.), the honorable gentleman had Alice, his companion of sixteen years, "put to sleep after being diagnosed with abdominal cancer." Alice, a Belgian Malinot shepherd, was frequently taken along to meetings with congressional leaders and foreign dignitaries—and this bizarre nonsense from a fellow widely adjudged one of the least aberrant figures in Congress. Think what the others are like!

• In religious news, those four soccer players banned for life by the Zimbabwe Football association for publicly voiding on the field at the Harare soccer stadium were apparently acting in accord with religious beliefs. Nonetheless, association chairman Mr. Nelson Chirwa asseverated that "It is a public indecency for a player to openly urinate on the football pitch. We all know that it is all superstition and the belief in juju that almost all the clubs have taken to believe in is strongly deplored," and very hard on the grass. Members of the southern Tongogara (pronounced cho-cho-Goo-Goo) team wetted the field on a tip from the team witch doctor, whose contract may not be renewed. Rather than triumphing, the Tongogaras lost 2-0 to the Mayfield Midgets. In Fort Collins, Colorado, police almost certainly have begun questioning men of Iranian nationality after theorizing that the man who has robbed four women and murdered another is obsessed by women's underwear. Police developed this theory after discovering that their suspect stole twenty-five pairs of panties from the home of one of his victims, who seems to be a bit underwear-obsessed herself.

• The Christmas season brought the usual number of contretemps. There were various disputes around the Republic over the shocking appearances of Menorahs and Nativity scenes dangerously close to firehouses, city jails, and other government properties; and in Green Bay, Wisconsin, Mrs. Debra Stutts slapped a boycott on the neighborhood school where her charming daughter, Miss Cherish Stutts, was asked by a kindergarten teacher not to air her doubts about Santa Claus. So indignant is Mrs. Stutts over her daughter's freedom of thought that she will not allow Cherish back until early 1990 when, of course, controversy over the Easter Bunny begins and Ground Hog Day, and what will this budding hag say about Valentine's Day? But the most unusual Yuletide row took place at Minnesota's Moorhead State University where a female psychology teacher, Miss Margaret Potter, grew alarmed over the capacity of mistletoe to excite stupration among male students and prevailed on the administration to ban the potentially aphrodisiac weed from campus. In the memorable words of University President Rolland Dille, "I'm not against Christmas . . . But we've come a long way in eliminating some of the customs that encouraged a very different treatment of women. In my opinion, mistletoe tends to sanctify uninvited endearment (by the opposite sex)." To *sanctify* uninvited *endearment*? Is the thing possible? Anyone who has ever laid eyes on the ghastly Prof. Potter or caught her upwind must know that there are limits to mistletoe's puissance. And finally, those in Guayaquil, Ecuador, who denounced Mayor Elsa Bucaran's vow to throw Christmas gifts from her window as "demagoguery" have been vindicated. Three women were crushed to death in the unsightly melee beneath her window and another seventeen persons were treated for serious injuries.

• The 1985 winner of the H. L. Mencken Award, a Sioux Indian who publishes an Indian newspaper in South Dakota, Mr. Tim Giago (pronounced Gy-Aý-goh), has vowed to return his award and even possibly the $2,500 that went with it owing to reports that the late Mr. Mencken interred racist observations in diaries that were to be published on January 15. It is not clear whether Mr. Giago objects because Mr. Mencken's remarks were bigoted or because they were insufficiently bigoted. For that matter, it is not clear that Mr. Giago ever read the diaries. President George H. W. Bush felt the heat in the kitchen for sending two high government officials to Red China, as we now are free to call it; and the governments of Panama's General Manuel Antonio Noriega and Rumania's Nicolae Ceausescu fell after some prompting in the first case from an American strike force and in the second case from Rumanians who have seen the future and know from the present and the past that it works. Officials in Poland refused the offer of Sr. Robert Napoleone, of the Italian Communist party, to buy a statue of Mr. Vladimir I. Lenin that has received rough treatment at the hands and feet of Polish workers in Nowa Huta.

• The *Washington Times* conferred its Gruesome Murder of the Year Award

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on Mr. Richard Craft for putting his wife's body through a wood-chipping machine that he had placed on a bridge so that the ground-up parts would be sprayed into the body of water below. The *Times* is Washington's most conservative newspaper. In Hamburg, West Germany, Mr. Mathias Rust, the youthful German pacifist who was once imprisoned in the Soviet Union for flying a borrowed aeroplane into Moscow and landing it in Red Square, has been nabbed by German authorities for stabbing a nurse who resisted his advances. And terror has struck San Francisco's elites, who are for the most part unwilling recipients for the second year of underwear mailings. According to reports, as yet unverified by *The American Spectator*, some rogue has been mailing large-size men's underwear—often soiled—along with obscene photographs of a white-haired man, to the city's elected officials and civic leaders, some of whom are very irate—but, of course, there must be others who find the mailings very arty. Perhaps there might be a place for them in one of the Republic's great museums, next to the works of Andres Serrano, creator of *Piss Christ.*

—RET

CORRESPONDENCE

The Allyn Conwell Syndrome

I found Steven C. Munson's review of David Pryce-Jones's *The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs* (*TAS*, December 1989) sickening beyond description. One would have to go back to the writings of Julius Streicher to find equally vicious racial caricatures.

Munson claims that Pryce-Jones "returned to the Middle East many times" and used a "comprehensive reading of Arab literature" in preparing his book. If so, he wasted his time and money. The opinions and mythology presented in Munson's review could have been gathered from any beery contract worker ranting and whining in a Bangkok bar about the deficiencies of the "sand niggers" and the injustices that he suffered at their hands.

As a long-time resident of the Arab world, I feel that I am as qualified as Pryce-Jones to discuss Arab culture from an outsider's perspective. I would like to offer the following observations on some of his points:

1. Arab families are "in the hands of an undisputed autocrat who judges himself fit to assess and extend the collective interest." Women are "possessed of few rights, little freedom, denied opportunities for education, work, and ownership." "Polygamy, underage marriage, temporary marriage, and divorce by repudiation are common practices in the Arab world, and in some places, such as the royal households of Saudi Arabia, one can still find harems, concubines, and slave girls."

No Arab family I know bears even a faint resemblance to Pryce-Jones's grotesque portrait. Arab fathers are respected and obeyed more than their West European and American counterparts, although their influence on the family is probably no greater than that of fathers in many South and East European cultures. It seems odd to find veneration of parents decried in a traditionalist conservative journal!

Even in the conservative cultures of the Persian Gulf states, education for women is available through the college level and women engineers, bankers, and doctors can be found. I readily admit that Gloria Steinem would strongly condemn the status of women in conservative Arab society, but this does not alarm me as much as it seems to alarm Messrs. Munson and Pryce-Jones.

Polygamy is virtually extinct among the upper and middle classes of the Gulf states and is uncommon even in the lower classes. Arranged marriages are scarcely unique to Arab culture and have proved somewhat more successful than Pryce-Jones would have us believe. In Pakistan, the divorce rate in "love marriages" is substantially higher than in arranged marriages.

Pryce-Jones seems to have included a variety of fantastic stories about Arab sexual practices and perversions in his book, which suggests a morbid interest on his part in these matters. I know of no convincing evidence that bizarre sexual practices are more prevalent in Cairo than they are in London or Arlington.

2. In business, Arabs regard lying as "not really a moral matter but a method of safeguarding honor and

(continued on page 50)

ENEMIES LIST UPDATE

The call for a New McCarthyism (*TAS*, July, October, and November 1989) continues to stimulate reader fury. Each day when that original victim of socialism in our United States, the Postman, arrives (late) with his subsidized burden, we receive fresh candidates for the oubliette. Letters have come from Puerto Rico, Australia, the enslaved Marxist-Leninist state of Oregon, and even from (pre-counter-revolutionary) Bulgaria:

Mr. O'Rourke,

I can imagine Your surprise, when You would reading, that Bulgarian (Bulgaria is a totalitarian country), 25 years old, wants to add some names to Your list. First, I want to say, that *TAS* is the best western magazine I can read into the central library in Sofia—and I can read *Commentary* (Jewish, but very good), *New Republic* (vice-president's favorite one), *Nation* (the great enemy of all Soviet dissidents), *Policy Review, Partizan Review, New Yorker, Wilson Quarterly, San Francisco Review of Books, Dissent* and so on.

I think, that in The New Enemies List can exist very well:

F. D. Roosevelt (gifting totalitarianism to Eastern Europe)

Oliver Stown (I am not sure, I've written his name correctly)—the movie maker, together with Sheens

Pablo Picasso and all who don't know their millions and pay them for his art

Mrs. Huffington's critics

The Beatles

The French Revolution (the first totalitarian one)

All KGB agents, except traitors

Robert Kennedy

Boris Yeltsin

—Vesselin Petkoff, Sofia, Bulgaria

Let Non-Comrade Petkoff be an inspiration to us all. It is a glorious thing to watch the Warsaw Pact come to bits, yes. But now we must take our cruise missiles and retarget them at college social science departments and public television stations. The defeat and humiliation of the Soviet bloc should barely whet our appetite. Shall the Berlin Wall tumble and a Democratic majority in the House of Representatives stand? How could we explain to our grandchildren that we shot Nicolae Ceausescu like a rat at the dump but gave "Oliver Stown" an Academy Award? I vote we prorogue the progressives and leave the bleeding hearts with bloody noses, no quarter asked and none given. *Ceterum censeo delenda est Liberalism.*

To that end the *TAS* New Enemies List will continue. Every nomination for infamy sent to us will see print in the November 1990 issue of *TAS* and, if might and right do not fail us, in each November issue of *TAS* thereafter.

We choose November to commemorate the November 14 birthday of that misunderstood and slightly whoozled genius Senator Joe. Anybody who permanently smeared the memory of Robert F. Kennedy and temporarily kept Roy Cohn out of the discotheques can't have been all bad. Maybe there weren't that many Communists in the State Department, but there sure were a whole lot of Democrats at Foggy Bottom. And, Joe, that's close enough for government work. November 14 also happens to be the birthday of well-known royalist Prince Charles, Mamie the-last-First-Lady-to-keep-her-mouth-shut Eisenhower, and the *TAS* Enemies List originator—me. Thus it's a stellar day for conservatives all around (or so say I). Anyway, give us your tiresome, your poor-mouths, your muddled asses yearning for a good kick in the Calvins and we will make mock of them in print.

Write to:

The New Enemies List
The American Spectator
P.O. Box 10448
Arlington, Virginia 22210-1448

Send your blacklists as soon as possible and by no means later than capitalism's ersatz May Day, September 3, or your victims will have to wait until 1991 for public execration.

Meanwhile, to tide us over until November, here's a nice, fat, bum-on-the-plush type of enemy . . .

Lorimar Studios

These purveyors of technicolor sewage bought the old MGM lot where the various buildings were named after great movie stars of yore. Lorimar promptly changed the name of the Robert Taylor Building. Why? Because the admirable and upstanding Mr. Taylor had cooperated with the House Un-American Activities Committee and testified against those leftover lefties of small note, the "Hollywood Ten." Lorimar, may your every film star Pia Zadora, be produced by Dino DeLaurentis, directed by John Landis, cost as much as *Heaven's Gate*, get reviews worse than *Ishtar*, and experience the same popular success as *Leonard Part VI.* And may your video rights be pirated besides.

—P. J. O'Rourke
Washington, D.C.

(The writer holds the Gen. Curtis LeMay Memorial Chair at The American Spectator Center for Anti-Communist Studies.)

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EDITORIALS

MORAL HAMS AND BRUTES

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

The Communist regimes of Eastern Europe have collapsed so fast that thousands of Eastern bloc intelligence agents and military advisers are now stranded throughout the Third World with no guarantee of airfare home and possibly no home. That is a fact. There are thousands of these brutes who hitherto have grimly gone about the business of fomenting international terror and subversion from such garden spots as Central America and the Middle East. Alas, so rapid has been the decline of their Communist governments that they now can be numbered among the homeless.

Yet in this great free world capital one of the emerging news stories is the story of a "Conservative Crack-Up" within the United States. The decline of Communism means the decline of conservatism, if you can follow the sudorific logic.

In the early 1980s some conservatives, myself included, attempted to initiate discussion of a Liberal Crack-Up based on a string of Liberal political defeats, policy botches, and defections from the Liberal cause. No Liberal wanted to discuss the subject. Though our evidence was indisputable it was not unavoidable, and so the Liberals simply refused to discuss the crack-up that has kept them out of synch with the electorate for a decade. Now they all want to discuss the topic of a Conservative Crack-Up, but once again without addressing the evidence. After all, the conservatives have not been losing and are not without policies. They are winning. George Bush is a conservative. His approval rating is near 70 percent. No Liberal is a threat to him, and all Liberalism still faces the problem of confronting the extremism in its ranks.

What is more, the Liberals have nothing new or alluring to offer the electorate. Or does one consider the Hon. George Mitchell, senator from the great state of Maine, new and alluring? The gravamen of the argument that conservatism is going to crack up is that conservatives will no longer have anti-Communism to hold them together. But anti-Communism is another conservative position that is being vindicated by history, and it is not the only binding idea of conservatism. Furthermore, conservatives do not need anti-Communism to hold them together when there is always a towering pecksniff like Senator Mitchell around wearing a clown's suit and demonstrating that Liberalism is bankrupt.

Now this great man is haranguing George Bush for sending emissaries to the Communist government of Peking. Was Senator Mitchell opposed to the Nixon opening with China in 1972? The brutality of the Red Chinese was far greater then than now and there was far less evidence that it might ameliorate. Is Senator Mitchell in favor of isolating China as we did in the 1950s and 1960s when at least Chairman Mao was causing mischief throughout the Third World and railing against the West? Would Senator Mitchell favor returning to the former American policy of championing Taiwan as a pro-Western alternative to Peking? Well, as a matter of fact, Senator Mitchell is one of those moral hams who is interested neither in reverting to the policies of the past nor in confecting a policy for the future.

Such Liberals sanctimoniously intone high-minded pieties under the mistaken impression that they are intoning policies. In the 1970s these poseurs were for "negotiations" with every left-wing despotism on earth, despite the fact that America was too weak to negotiate with Botswana and that many of the despotic negotiants had no desire to negotiate. Nowadays he would have us "dialogue" with Cuba, Nicaragua, and doubtless the guerrillas in El Salvador; but like the Claude Rains character in *Casablanca* he is "shocked" that the Bush Administration has entered into dialogue with Peking, for he is "shocked" that its Communist despots acted like Communist despots in Tiananmen Square. Will he be "shocked" if the Soviets respond similarly in Red Square? Right now only a handful of demonstrators have to gather there, and the KGB is out in force.

Senator Mitchell is not alone. Dozens of other moral hams from the Liberal ranks are reviling the Bush Administration for doing precisely what Democrats in the past have urged. My guess is that the electorate sees through their hypocrisy, and the Liberal Crack-Up endures. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM

Congressman Andrew Jacobs (D-Ind.), also known as "the Singing Congressman," has for nearly a year had legislation before Congress that would change the national anthem from "The Star Spangled Banner" to "America the Beautiful." He claims he has difficulty singing our present anthem. Of course, it was originally an old English drinking song, and I find it implausible that a U.S. congressman would have difficulty singing any drinking song whatsoever. Perhaps the congressman's problem is that he makes his attempts in the morning. Try it in the afternoon, Mr. Jacobs, just after lunch.

Ah, but I am being droll. The Hon. Jacobs is a highly esteemed member of the House, he being one of those honorable gentlemen who have never been arrested, indicted, tried, or incarcerated. Congressman Jacobs has passed no bad checks, never appeared drunk and disorderly in public (though I do not approve of his voting record, and he has uttered considerable pish and posh over the years in pursuance of the Liberal hallucination), and only pilfered from the U.S. Treasury on behalf of the usual Noble Causes, never for personal gain. As with all Capitol Hill figures, Congressman Jacobs wants to leave his mark on history, and so he now takes his case for changing the national anthem to the readers of *Parade* magazine, where 315,000 recently cast their vote for him as against 74,000 stick-in-the-muds who insist on singing the unsingable.

In making his case against "The Star Spangled Banner," the Singing Congressman resorts to the same stale charges that have been reviewed by the citizenry before and found unpersuasive. He comes up with nothing new, though he wants us Americans to begin sports events with something new. He is chagrined by the present anthem's unwholesome origins as a drinking song that "few of us will ever master the singing of." Well, Sir, down a few beers and try again. He goes along with the old canard that the song is too bellicose, but weigh it against "La Marseillaise." As against the anthems of most virile republics "The Star Spangled Banner" is actually quite irenic. Finally, Congressman Jacobs acquiesces to the old charge that the song contains "outdated anti-British sentiments." Come, come, anti-British sentiments are *never* outdated.

I have no quarrel with "America the Beautiful." As music it is lovelier than the "Star Spangled Banner," but I agree with the columnist Colman McCarthy that some of its lyrics make no sense. Mr. McCarthy's recommen-

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dation is that we drop the present anthem for what he calls "Woody Guthrie's classic," "This Land is Your Land." Of course, Mr. McCarthy is a left-wing sentimentalist who does not understand that the lyrics to the Guthrie song would play right into the hands of European sophisticates who insist Americans are yokels. Well, if he cannot perceive the essential mawkishness of this song, let him consider this. Such lyrics as

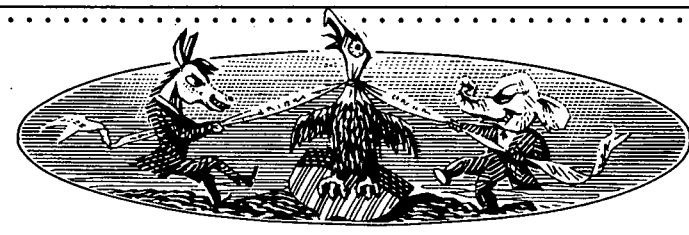
"This land is your land, this land is my land, . . . This land was made for you and me."

could very easily be misinterpreted abroad as the lyrics of an anthem for greedy real estate developers.

If we really must change the national anthem to a more tuneful song abrim with generosity and with no nationalistic huffing and puffing, a song bespeaking the genius of the American people and suggestive of the Republic's natural endowments, how about "Happy Birthday"? All Americans are familiar with its lush, rolling, profoundly ingratiating lilt. It would be a grand way to begin a baseball game or the carnage of football and hockey. And think of the impact worldwide as the U.S. Olympic Team enters the stadium at the opening ceremonies of an Olympiade singing "Happy Birthday"—talk about good will! The song is copyrighted, so the government will have to pay a little for this anthem. It would be worth every penny.

Yet, the spoilsports will contend that there are some things not to be changed. "The Star Spangled Banner" is useful because it has been with us through our lives and the lives of all our American ancestors—or at least most of our American ancestors. It has been with us in war and peace. Its value is that it is old. Yet how can we convince a common congressman that something is valuable because it is old? □

CAPITOL IDEAS



A CRUEL HOUSING HOAX?

by Tom Bethell

Kimi Gray is the chairperson of the Kenilworth-Parkside Resident Management Corporation, which manages a much-celebrated 464-unit public housing property in Washington, D.C. (Kimi objects to the use of the word "project" and insists on "property.") A *Washington Post* magazine profile referred to her as an "irresistible force," physically a "massive figure with short cropped hair, large earrings and several pounds of jewelry around her neck and wrists," politically a lifelong Democrat. She is forty-five years old, and was raised by her mother and grandmother in the Frederick Douglass housing project in southeast Washington. Along with other black women around the country, such as Bertha Gilkey of St. Louis, Mildred Hailey of Boston, and Irene Johnson of Chicago, Kimi Gray has been a driving force within the tenant-management movement in the United States. A change in the law has permitted resident groups to buy, or at least to assume control of, some housing projects, so taking charge of their own lives. "For the more than one million Americans living in Federal housing projects," wrote Stuart M. Butler in the *Washington Post*, "homeownership has long been a distant dream." But thanks to these changes, and the efforts of conservatives, "this dream is about to become a reality . . ."

The irony was not lost on David Osborne, who wrote the Kimi Gray profile for the *Post*. "Empowerment of poor people was a theme close to the heart of the New Left, carried forward into populist citizens' organizations with fanciful acronyms: ACORN, COPS, BUILD. But in Washington, conservatives like Jack Kemp and Stuart Butler, director of domestic policy studies at the Heritage Foundation, led the charge for tenant management and ownership—and they convinced Ronald Reagan and George Bush to come along. Low-income housing activists have supported tenant management for two decades. But when Reagan and then Congressman Kemp picked up the cause—and added the wrinkle of *selling* public housing to its tenants—red flags went up throughout the liberal community."

"This romantic notion of homeownership is a cruel hoax on the poor," Bob McKay, executive director of the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities, has been quoted as saying.

"Interesting, isn't it?" Jack Kemp, the secretary of housing and urban development, said in his office on the tenth floor of the HUD building. "They say it's a 'cruel hoax.' And you know why? Because it takes power away from the public housing authorities and puts it where it belongs—among the residents themselves." Kemp leaned across and grabbed my knee. "The liberals are saying—you know what they are saying? 'These people are perpetually poor.' They believe in the perpetuity of the condition of poverty. Whereas you and I believe there are ways to release deeply embedded, hidden talents."

I had made repeated attempts to reach Kimi Gray, without success. I had seen her on a television series that also featured Friedrich Hayek, and more recently I had enjoyed watching Bertha Gilkey on CBS's "Forty-Eight Hours." ("What is it going to take for us to take on some responsibility?" she had shouted in stentorian tones to a tenant-management training group in Chicago.) These are fierce women, a black matriarchal elite, armed (by the liberals) with accusation privileges and indignation rights, doubly empowered as women *and* minorities, emerging now in righteous wrath from the kitchens and sculleries of the social welfare plantation. Here they have been kept down for a generation or two, but now are ready to do battle with their overseers ensconced in the welfare bureaucracies.

I told Kemp that Kimi Gray seemed hard to find. Later I read that she had kept him waiting an hour and a half for a "photo opportunity." Kemp summoned an assistant, David Caprara, who arrived within a matter of seconds from some nether region in the building. Caprara was the man who dealt with Kimi Gray and Kenilworth-Parkside, apparently. He took me down to his office and called Kimi Gray's assistant, a man called Mitch Dasher. Apparently an appointment with Kimi could be arranged without too much difficulty.

In the next week or two I called Dasher several times, but Kimi remained elusive. She was "running around," I was told. Or out of town. Or somewhere else. Or not to be found. Eventually Dasher told me to come over on Friday, and she *might* be there. On the appointed day it was snowing. Kenilworth-Parkside is in the eastern corner of the District of Columbia, east of the RFK Stadium and the Anacostia River. A 30-year-old complex of low-rise buildings, Kenilworth-Parkside is one of fifty-eight public housing projects in the District of Columbia (11,954 units, total operating budget $50 million). Most of the buildings were boarded up or under renovation. One or two construction workers could be seen trudging quietly through the snow. The entire property is being reconstructed with HUD funds, costing at least $25 million, possibly $35 million. Still, I told myself, if the tenants are going to end up owning the whole thing, this will be money well spent . . .

"So you made it," said Mitch Dasher, none too enthusiastically, as I made my way into the office, stamping the snow off my feet. The walls were covered with plaques and awards to Kimi Gray, signed photographs addressed to her, one of Dan Rather, one of President Reagan, one of Jack Kemp; dozens of photographs of Gray shaking hands with the high and mighty. An outsize wooden "key" symbolized the transfer of ownership. But there was no sign of Kimi Gray herself.

Dasher was a watchful, quiet, intelligent man, once the chief counsel for the Black Congressional Caucus, he said. He had worked in a law office downtown, but Kimi Gray had persuaded him to throw in his lot with the poor. The phone rang. Mitch explained

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to the caller that Kimi was "running around" somewhere. A solidly built man wearing a belted raincoat came into the office, Willie Wood by name. He played defensive back for the Green Bay Packers in the Vince Lombardi era and was recently inducted into the Hall of Fame. He said he's now in the construction business. He, too, seemed to be looking for Kimi, who (I surmised) might indeed be in a position to decide who participates in these government contracts, and who does not.

"If all the programs were working, the kids would be inundated," Willie Wood was saying. His tone was patient, deferential. "They would be so busy, the day would be gone before they realized it." But the programs did not seem to be working. All kinds of bad habits were popping up. "Lost my secretary, she developed a crack habit," Wood continued. "Jackie had to be about thirty years old. And I was out in L.A. when we had that shooting at the elementary school."

Mitch Dasher was guarded, noncommittal. Still no sign of Kimi Gray, however, and eventually Wood went back out into the snow. Dasher told me that at Kenilworth-Parkside they have a Latchkey Program, an Enrichment Program, a College Here We Come Program, a Substance Abuse Prevention Program, and a Reverse Commute Program (the latter funded by the Urban Mass Transit Administration). So many grants and programs. I could see why they would be needing lawyers. The liberals in the welfare bureaucracies would have their spy-glasses trained on them from afar, looking for any trace of irregularity. If any were found, the *Washington Post* would be informed, probably by anonymous telephone call. The General Accounting Office had already done an investigation of Kenilworth at the request of Sen. Alan Cranston. The plantation owners might have been driven off the premises, but they were still watching and waiting, biding their time, noting every transaction. One day maybe there would be a big headline and tenant management would be discredited—a ripoff, a cruel hoax on the poor. There would be gleeful editorials and a *New York Times* wrap-up telling us that the slaves weren't ready yet. I could see why Kimi Gray seemed unenthusiastic about meeting the press.

Mitch was concerned that the renovation of the property was lagging behind schedule. Over 300 low-income families had been moved out to accommodate the reconstruction. I gathered that sale of the property (from the District's Department of Public and Assisted Housing to Kimi Gray's Resident Management Corporation) still had not taken place—this despite a vaunted key-transferring ceremony in October 1988. But this merely celebrated HUD's "conditional approval" of the sale. "The actual transfer is projected for 1990," according to the recent GAO Report.

When the property is renovated, the tenants returned (those that do), and the sale completed, will the tenants be able to buy their units?

"They will have a chance to buy the units," Dasher replied. "But I must alert you. There is a considerable problem deciding the price. We are trying to hold it to around $10,000 per unit. We have consultants working on this." According to David K. Groo, program manager for the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (Robert Woodson, president), which is under contract to the D.C. Department of Public Housing to provide technical assistance to Kenilworth, "the two- and three-bedroom units will probably be sold for $16,000 to $18,000." Three- and four-bedroom row houses will probably sell in the low twenties, Groo said.

In Britain, of course, council houses were sold to tenants way below market prices, and if this serves the goal of reorienting the incentives of those on

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welfare, giving them reason to care for the property they can now call their own, that is all to the good. The new British owners of formerly public housing are full owners with clear title to their property. Will the new Kenilworth-Parkside owners be able to sell their units to any buyer?

"No," said Mitch Dasher. They will have to sell them back to the resident management corporation. "We're trying to make this work for low-income Americans," he said. "We would like to ensure that the property remains in low-income hands. As opposed to a developer or a speculator. By training I am a lawyer. I couldn't speculate and buy five units for $9,500 each. We are trying to prevent speculation, and to prevent developers from participating in this." The overall Kenilworth-Parkside property cannot be sold to a developer, nor can parts of it be sold off. It can only be sold back to the D.C. housing authority, or possibly to another resident management corporation. In legal terms, the property is entailed: there are severe restrictions on its resale, written into Section 123 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987.

Thomas Jefferson in the eighteenth century warned against the dangers of entail. It tends to perpetuate a feudal aristocracy that can neither manage the lands that it inherits, nor sell it to others. I sensed more strongly than ever that the plantation owners were watching intently from their bureaucratic redoubts. They still own the property and aren't about to surrender it any time soon. This explains why there has not been more liberal grumbling about tenant management. They have been in control all along. In fact, the 1987 act requires that for each unit of public housing that is "sold," one more unit must be added. Thus the liberal plantation may be slyly expanded.

"Tenant management," then, is an attempt to enhance the value of housing that will remain ultimately under government control, without permitting any of the people who live in it to capture that enhanced value.

"One of the great fears," Robert Woodson told me, when I asked him if this indeed was the law, "is that the government could pay to renovate these facilities, turn them over to the resident groups, who in turn sell them on the open market, enabling a few families to reap the windfall. That's the fear, and I think with justification. To some extent Congress is correct. The residents also wanted protection from having taxpayers subsidize the windfall of a few people."

"I think units have to be sold to another low-income person," Stuart Butler told me. "So it isn't like the British version of the sale of public housing, which is free and clear."

No windfall profits on this plantation, folks. Not any time soon. This is reminiscent of the El Salvador land reform (also supported by the U.S. government), in which the new "owners" were told that they could not sell their share of the property, nor could the collectivized property be sold (except to the El Salvador government, which in reality owned it all along). At Kenilworth, buyers will be able to sell units back to the cooperative, but not profitably.

Earlier, Kemp had told me that he prefers the phrase homeownership to privatization because this gives us "the high ground in response to liberals who say: 'They wouldn't know what to do with their property, or they would probably sell it to make a profit, or they would leave it to their children.' All of which we would hold as demonstrably good effects in and of themselves."

Kenilworth residents will be eligible for low-income (Section 8) housing vouchers whether they buy or rent. What incentive, then, will they have to buy in the first place?

(To be concluded in a future installment.) □

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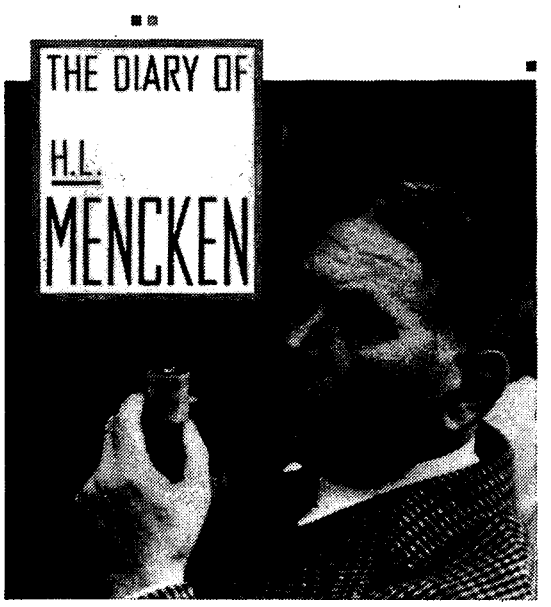

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Michael Ledeen

THE BEGINNING OF THE BEGINNING

For all we know, Gorbachev is the Pope's agent busily dismantling the Soviet Empire. The trick now is to make sure he completes the job.

Our strategy toward the Soviet Empire must now rest upon our understanding of its collapse, and our assessment of our ability to play a role in ensuring that it does not return. How can we measure the real changes that have taken place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe? How confident can we be that the changes we see are durable? These are not easy questions, because this is the first time that a totalitarian state has begun to disintegrate from within. The previous totalitarian states—Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy—were destroyed by military power, and were replaced by democratic governments that were in large part the creation of the victorious Allied Armies at the end of the Second World War. Thus, we have no model for the collapse of totalitarianism, and we have precious few guidelines to evaluate the degree of evolution toward democracy.

There is, however, one obvious measuring stick, and it has not been stressed in most of the commentaries on the events of the past few years: it is the instrument of terror that was used so successfully to enforce the rules of the totalitarian state. That instrument is the KGB and its counterparts in the other Soviet bloc countries. While under attack from the democratic forces, these "organs of state security" remain largely intact, and thus far they're still under a considerable degree of Communist control. In Poland, the Solidarity-led government had to concede the interior ministry to the Communist party, apparently in response to Gorbachev's demands. In Czechoslovakia, where the new interim government has—for the first time in the Soviet bloc—a non-Communist interior minister, his two deputies are Communists. In the Soviet Union, the KGB has been strengthened during glasnost and perestroika.

To be sure, there has been an effort to present the instruments of terror as more benign. The KGB itself has put on several television specials, with its chief starring in a novel Moscow press conference. The East German security service, responding in part to criticism from its former leader Markus Wolf, has promised to be nice. And reactions to mass demonstrations have varied widely, ranging from the use of clubs and poison gas, to total restraint, especially in recent weeks in Czechoslovakia. This is not enough, nor is it enough that the Hungarians expelled Edward Lee Howard, the American CIA officer who defected to the Soviet Union with the secrets of our Moscow operations.

It would be folly to believe that a fundamental and durable transformation has taken place so long as the KGBs of the bloc remain intact, and under Communist control. Surely the inhabitants of the vast Gulag do not believe it, and neither should we. When the Nazis and the Fascists fell, their successors dismantled the instruments of totalitarian terror in short order. Thus far, only one full and several half steps in this direction have been paced off. The Poles have disbanded the hated ZOMOs, the special security police that did the dirty work in the winter of 1981-82. The half steps have been taken in East Germany, where several top officials of its previously untouchable security service have been arrested, and in Hungary, where the government has promised to disband some of the "workers' militias" that have been used in the repression of the Hungarian people since the end of the Second World War. At this writing, angry East Germans are trying to make sure that incriminating documents are not shredded. These people want a second Nuremberg, but they know that the security services will have to be tamed before that can happen.

Not only has there been relatively little weakening of the individual security services, but their activities against the West have actually increased under Gorbachev's rule. KGB subversion and espionage against the United States have grown considerably, as we have learned from sources ranging from CIA director William Webster to Senator David Boren, the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. West European intelligence experts with whom I have recently spoken report a similar increase in hostile activity in their countries as well. Even more disturbing is the fact that cooperation between the bloc intelligence services seems to continue as before; even the Polish and Hungarian services remain in lockstep with the KGB. One might have expected some weakening of these ties at a moment when the sovereignty of the Communist parties in those countries has come under such vigorous attack. That it has not happened shows us that we are still at the beginning of the beginning of the end.

To say this is not to suggest that the tremendous political changes throughout the Soviet Empire are not real, or are not significant. One might even explain the increase in bloc espionage against the West by the same structural crisis that has been the motor of so many of the gratifying blows to the Communist system: unable to produce wealth or modern technology on their own, the Soviet-led nations have been compelled to steal it from us. But the

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continued strength of the security services, the ongoing unity of the bloc services, and the increasing tempo of their activities suggest two sobering thoughts. First, at least some of the international objectives of the Kremlin remain unchanged, and these objectives are hostile to us and other democratic countries around the world. Indeed, in the era of glasnost and perestroika, the opportunities for hostile action in the West have increased, and the KGB is taking full advantage of the improved atmosphere. Second, the chances for real democracy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are greatly threatened by the instruments of the terror that has crushed freedom for so long. Until the democratic forces within the crumbling empire gain control over the "organs of state security," no one can be confident that the totalitarian beast has been struck a mortal blow.

Lest it be believed that glasnost has totally transformed political life in the Soviet Union, attention should be paid to the case of Sergei Kuznetsov, a journalist for *Glasnost* magazine, one of the most outspoken critics of Soviet Communism (and of Gorbachev's largely ineffective policies to transform the Soviet economic system). Kuznetsov has been subjected to the full range of Stalinist horrors: accused of "slandering the Soviet state," deposited in a psychiatric institution, condemned to three years of hard labor in the Gulag, he is at this writing on the verge of death after forty-five days of hunger strike. The purge of Kuznetsov was so blatant and so disgusting that even his court-appointed defense lawyer refused to participate in the charade. We are still at the beginning of the beginning.

Meanwhile, what are we to do? Our ability to influence the outcome of the Soviet crisis is limited, primarily because there is no cure for the Soviets' disease. Gorbachev's remedy is designed to "reform" Communism, but Communism cannot be reformed. It can only be replaced with something that works. He sometimes sounds as if he knows this (when he speaks of the need to introduce capitalistic elements into the system), but he more often sounds as if he doesn't (as when he warns us about "exporting capitalism" into Eastern Europe). This sort of schizophrenia does not inspire confidence, and that is why Gorbachev's popularity is so low among his own people. The reformers despise him for his cowardliness, and the anti-reformers hate him for having unleashed the demons of reform. It is also why the leaders of Western Europe are so suddenly pessimistic. After years of Gorbymania, we are now hearing from the likes of Monsieur Mitterrand, Mrs. Thatcher, and even Herr Kohl that the crisis of the Soviet system is very profound indeed, and that one should not race to pour money into its ratholes. So for those who want to "help Gorbachev" (meaning help him to shore up the doomed system), the answer must be: forget it.

On the other hand, it is hard to imagine any other Soviet ruler doing so much, so efficiently, and so rapidly to dismantle the empire. It was this amazing destructive energy of Gorbachev's that led me to write in these pages, three years ago, that he must be a CIA agent. It was a spoof of course; the CIA isn't capable of designing such a brilliant strategy. Only a protege of Andropov could have done that. And it is clearly in our interest that he remain and continue to destabilize Communism throughout the empire. One would like to think that George Bush and his advisers have figured this out, and are being nice to Gorbachev through Machiavellian cunning. But here again, it probably doesn't matter what we do—the process over there is quite out of control (and has been for some time). It will have to run its course. Meanwhile, we have some useful moves in the great game.

Two lines of attack in particular are available to us, one to increase the strength of the democratic movements within the empire, and to carve out at least a small sector of free enterprise to serve as a launching-pad for the future. The second is to ensure that we do not unwittingly save Communism from its richly deserved destiny.

We want to do everything possible to dismantle the empire, and that means we want democratic governments in the former satellites. Why not help the forces of democracy? Everyone agrees that this should be done, but there is great confusion about how best to do it.

The congressional frenzy to ship American credits eastward to Hungary and Poland reminds me of a fascinating conversation with Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez of Spain in the autumn of 1977, at a time when Basque terrorism was very active, when the Spanish economy was struggling to free itself from the constraints and dead weight of nearly forty years of Franco's heavy-handed protectionism, and when the future of democracy in Spain was being challenged by extremists on both left and right. He was greatly agitated. Suarez pounded his desk as he asked questions that are today being asked by East European leaders.

"Why are you not helping us?" he demanded. "Every other country, from Germany to Japan, that emerged from the darkness of fascism has received enormous American financial assistance. Some got the Marshall Plan, others received different kinds of help. To us, you give nothing. Is Spain supposed to be the only country in this century to bear this enormous burden by herself?" He spoke of his requests for American assistance in two areas: the economy, and the struggle against terrorism (which he correctly identified as the gravest threat to democracy in Spain). No significant financial aid was forthcoming, and the Carter Administration, in a seizure of moralistic legalism, refused to help in the fight against the Basques because they were held to be "local" rather than "international" terrorists, even though they lived in France, trained in Algeria, and killed in Spain. Later on, this changed a bit, but at the time Suarez was so furious at the American refusal that he wondered out loud if Carter preferred some other regime to his own.

What happened? Twelve years have now passed, and Spain, with no Marshall Plan, and with only token American assistance against the ETA terrorists, has become the boomingest country in the Common Market. As any investor in Europe will tell you, Spain has recorded a decade of spectacular economic growth in virtually every area of enterprise, her intelligentsia is on a par with any in the Western World, her fashions are world class, her cuisine now reaches the streets of Paris, New York, and Washington, and we shall all behold the glories of democratic Spain in the Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992.

All of this happened when the Spaniards, deprived of a safety net from the wealthier countries, set out to create new wealth. It has not been easy. It required investment from Spain's Common Market neighbors, and it has not been totally without pain (the continued high unemployment rate testifies to the extraordinary number of outmoded industries that had been protected by Franco, and the difficult entry

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of the Spanish working force into modern Europe). But it has been a great success, on both the political and the economic fronts. Those who feared that Spain might slide back into Francoism, or leap into the arms of the Eurocommunists, have all been proved wrong.

The same can be said about Portugal, which faced problems even more serious than Spain's. The Portuguese not only had to emerge from the protectionistic and anachronistic Salazar period, but also had to digest more than one million Portuguese colonists from Angola and Mozambique. Moreover, the threat of Communism was far graver in Lisbon than in Madrid, and the chaos following the fall of the dictatorship was far greater. Yet Portugal today is clearly on the same path as Spain, and is a heavy favorite to be the next European economic miracle.

It's useful to keep these events in mind as we listen to the Poles' and the Hungarians' demands that we "support democracy" in their countries by sending money. It is a heartrending cry, and we instinctively feel we ought to help them as they undertake this monumentally difficult task. But the Spanish and Portuguese examples suggest that one central requirement in the economic transition from dictatorship to democracy is the creation of new wealth, and this is best achieved—indeed, one is tempted to say it can only be achieved—by productive investment. Government-to-government aid will only squander *our* money, without helping the East European or Soviet democratic forces, or even their economic prospects. And I doubt that the governments involved—ours and theirs—are particularly well equipped to identify the most productive investments. This requires the skills of businessmen, not politicians. Indeed, thus far most of the investments in Eastern Europe—greatly encouraged and assisted by the West German and other West European governments—have not been productive, either for Hungary and Poland, or for the Western investors. A lot of people are going to lose a lot of money in Eastern Europe in the next couple of years.

On the political side of the transition, we can, should, and are sharing with the Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians our understanding of parliamentary democracy, just as leaders of the Socialist International and the U.S. government assisted Mario Soares and Felipe Gonzales in the 1970s, and as Irving Brown and Jay Lovestone and David Dubinsky did for the trade union leaders of France, Germany, and Italy after the defeat of Hitler and Mussolini. But we should be skeptical of the alleged requirement that *we* engineer the transition, as if the victims of the empire didn't know how to do it. The merits of democracy are widely appreciated. The Poles, Czechs, Germans, Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Rumanians, and Hungarians who have survived Communist totalitarianism—and, as we will see in due course, the Russians as well—do not need instruction from us in the virtues of democracy. They undoubtedly cherish it far more than we do.

On the other hand, we could make some modest investments in the democratic movements within the empire that could bear enormous political dividends. Now is surely the time for us to help the striking coal miners, for example,[1] and to help provide the political tools for the democratic movements in the empire. They need word processors, xerox machines, desktop publishing kits, and faxes. Surely the National Endowment for Democracy was created for such projects, and its excellent director, Carl Gershman, can be counted upon to spend its money wisely if Congress will support him.

There are two additional areas where Western assistance seems appropriate: food (in the event of severe shortages) and the tools with which to create new wealth. The Marshall Plan provided wheat and other foods to starving Europeans, as well as printing presses, mimeograph machines, and other basic machinery needed to get the old continent working again. Today the tools will be different, but the concept should be the same. Give them the tools to create new wealth; don't try to transfer wealth in the expectation that we can thereby transform their societies.

It would be folly to believe that a fundamental and durable transformation has taken place so long as the KGBs of the bloc remain intact, and under Communist control.

The corollary to this axiom is that we must avoid the one potentially fatal mistake in the great game: do not give to the Communists the tools they need to avoid facing the consequences of their own failure. That means that we must hold firm on the wise policies that so damaged the empire in the first place: do not sell them the advanced technology they are unable to develop on their own, and which would strengthen their military establishment and shore up their weakening industrial base. If we were to do that, it would encourage the Communists to believe that the wheel of history has not made a full turn, and that they might yet hold on to at least part of the evil they created. We must do what we can to ensure that they lose it all.

There is an alarming tendency in some sectors of Washington to proclaim the Cold War ended, and turn over East-West relations to the businessmen, always eager to sell the Soviets the rope with which to haul themselves out of the pit. And the businessmen should be given a stern lecture on their potential East European partners: by all means do joint ventures with Solidarity, and with the opponents of the Communist regimes. But for heaven's sake, don't go about enriching the bad guys.

We must constantly remind ourselves, in these heady days of the Second Democratic Revolution, that our aim is victory, for our ideals and for those who have fought against (or simply survived) the empire. There will be many spasms before this thing is over, and it is highly likely that some of these spasms will be quite violent, and on a mass scale. The terrible violence in Rumania is not likely to remain an isolated example. If we keep our heads, maintain the pressure that cracked the totalitarian edifice, and support the democrats, we have every reason to expect a happy final chapter. But if we misstep now, it will prolong the agony, encourage the forces of evil, and increase the cost to ourselves and to the brave people who are beginning to sense that history is at last moving in their favor. Unlike the editors of *Time*, the citizens of the old empire do not want Gorbachev's palliative "reformist Communism." They want and deserve *no* Communism. That must be our objective as well.

It is sometimes as difficult to play a pat hand effectively as it is to cope with poor cards, and we are all familiar with the "fear of victory" in competition. It was discouraging to see our government announce its intention to undertake substantial defense cuts *before* Bush's conversation with Gorbachev. Surely we could have benefited from leaving a bit of doubt about the subject. Gorby is broke, the international equivalent of homeless, looking for work, for handouts, for a job, anything that will keep body and soul together. But somehow this man, who has presided over the destruction of the empire, and the ruination of what little was left of his country's economy, is treated like a master statesman. This is silly, especially at a time when he is participating in an intensification of revolutionary bloodshed in El Salvador, via his Cuban and Nicaraguan clients. Does he want American investment? Participation in GATT? Let him turn off the Caribbean spigot. If he will not do this (and particularly if he persists in telling us fables like "the Nicaraguans have been lying to me"), then tell him to think it over during the long Russian winter, and we can talk about it again in the spring.

You don't get dealt pat hands very often; when you get one, you should sweep all the chips off the table. Don't assume that lady fortune has taken up permanent residence on your shoulder. □

[1]Lane Kirkland and other AFL-CIO leaders were denied visas last summer when they tried to go to the Ukraine to support the coal miners' union.

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Terence P. Jeffrey

THE MAN WHO BOUGHT WASHINGTON

Say what you will about Charlie Keating, stalwart conservative, friend to U.S. senators, and beleaguered S&L tycoon. At least he never gave a dime to Ronald Reagan.

When the House Banking Committee met last April to begin marking up the $300 billion thrift industry bailout bill, D.C. Delegate Walter Fauntroy, a Baptist minister, asked his colleagues to bow their heads in prayer. O Lord, Fauntroy said, deliver us from parochialism, help us resist special interest legislation, lead us to do what is truly right for the nation as a whole. The members, as much in surprise as piety, sat in absolute silence as Fauntroy, who holds no vote, invoked the Almighty. A moment later, the committee chairman, Henry B. Gonzalez of Texas, recognized himself and offered up a special amendment aimed at helping a single San Antonio bank.

It was back to business as usual in one of the most fractious committees on Capitol Hill.

Gonzalez was already making Republicans on the committee upgrade their assessments of former chairman Fernand St Germain. St Germain, whose political style made ousted Speaker Jim Wright look open-minded and openhanded, had been thrown from office himself the previous November by a Rhode Island constituency after the FBI had forced the House ethics committee to reopen an investigation into his financial dealings. But St Germain had the one redeeming quality of a traditional pol: he was perfectly predictable. Whatever the thrift lobby wanted, it got.

Gonzalez, on the other hand, was not only unpredictable, but wacky. Twice he had stood in the well of the House and with soulful solemnity introduced resolutions calling for the impeachment of Ronald Reagan. Now, vested with a major chairmanship, he ran committee hearings in a stream-of-consciousness monologue that wavered erratically from poetic elegance to slapstick solecism.

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Many Democrats on the committee just plain hated him. Some of their antipathy was motivated by jealousy for his position, some by the hatred the thief always harbors for the (relatively) honest man, and some of it was well justified. Gonzalez had literally excommunicated many senior Democratic colleagues. Frank Annunzio, the Banking Committee's ranking Democrat and the powerful chairman of the House Administration Committee, had unsuccessfully been trying to reach Gonzalez by telephone every day since Congress had reconvened in January. Another senior Democrat privately admitted that the only way he could talk to the chairman was to stalk him like a common journalist through the subterranean corridors of the Capitol.

So when Gonzalez offered his private amendment to the thrift bailout, it came as a complete but characteristic surprise on both sides of the hearing room.

Jim Leach, a reformist Iowa Republican with a Princeton patois, interrupted Gonzalez. "Could the chair explain which bank? Does it have any implications for the insurance fund?" Gonzalez answered, "To my knowledge it has no implication for the fund, and the specific bank is the Frost National Bank in my area." He did not mention that Tom C. Frost, the bank's owner, had been a friend and campaign contributor for more than twenty years.

Chalmers Wylie of Ohio, the committee's ranking Republican, told Gonzalez he would agree to the amendment "as long as we have report language that this amendment would apply to only one bank." Gonzalez repeated, "The FDIC has no objection to this whatsoever." But then Annunzio took exception. "I oppose your amendment," he told Gonzalez, "and I am sorry that I must . . . [but it] comes at a bad time in the discussing of this bill. How could we be singling out one bank?"

When Tom Frost was asked this same question by the *Washington Times*, he denied that the amendment singled out one bank. "Henry described it erroneously in that markup hearing," he said. The amendment had been written to help an entire class of banks in the same situation as Frost's. In fact, Frost claims he had personally proposed it to William Seidman, the chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Seidman told Frost he thought it sounded reasonable and suggested he have his attorneys contact the attorneys for the FDIC. Frost's lawyers drafted the language, it was "massaged" by the FDIC's lawyers, and then Frost handed over his do-it-yourself amendment to Kelsay Meek, an "old friend" of his who happened to be Gonzalez's staff director on the Banking Committee.

Before the thrift bailout came up on the House floor in June, Congressman Leach let it be known that he was going to offer an amendment stripping all special interest riders from the bill. Gonzalez's amendment was one of those he was threatening to denounce. Meanwhile, the FDIC informed the banking chairman it could not absolutely guarantee that his amendment would help only his friend's bank. "There might be a few others out there," FDIC legislative liaison Alice Goodman told a Gonzalez staffer.

The FDIC actually thought the amendment was good policy. But that was not the point. Gonzalez had made a deal with Chalmers Wylie to approve the amendment on the assurance that it would help only one San Antonio bank, and now Leach was going to embarrass the chairman publicly on the most important banking bill of the decade. Before Leach could offer his amendment, Gonzalez offered one of his own: he stripped his favor to Tom Frost from the thrift bailout package.

On seeing the above story in the *Washington Times*, an experienced Capitol Hill reporter mockingly dismissed it. "Congressmen do those

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kinds of favors for friends all the time," he said. Alice Goodman at the FDIC concurred. "It just doesn't compare," she said, "to the Charles Keating affair."

She was right.

Charles H. Keating was a paragon of paleoconservative virtue. A World War II fighter pilot and Pan-American gold medal swimmer (1944), he had spent his middle years amassing millions by building expansive new neighborhoods in the deserts surrounding Phoenix, Arizona. A devout Roman Catholic, he pursued such recreational activities as harassing pornographers and supporting pro-life causes. In 1981, he wept on meeting Mother Teresa in Gallup, New Mexico. He then lent her a jet helicopter to visit a remote Indian reservation, and reportedly gave her $1 million to help set up a convent in Phoenix.

By 1984, when he applied to purchase the Lincoln Savings and Loan Association of Irvine, California, there was only one blotch on his record. In 1979 the Securities and Exchange Commission had accused him and a partner of fraudulently converting the assets of a real estate company to their personal use. Keating signed a consent decree neither claiming innocence nor admitting guilt but promising never to do it again. When the California Department of Savings and Loans reviewed Keating's application to purchase Lincoln, he promised the state commissioners that he would retain the association's officers and run the thrift as a traditional home mortgage lender. The commissioners never checked his record with the SEC. They liked Charlie Keating. He seemed like a solid citizen.

The early 1980s were vintage years for real estate speculators looking to get into the savings and loan business. As James Ring Adams has written in his new book *The Big Fix: Inside the S&L Scandal*,[1] a series of remarkably imprudent acts of Congress had created a situation where real estate developers could buy thrifts and use their federally insured deposits directly to finance high-risk ventures.

In 1980, at a late-night banking conference the Senate was trying to get the House to agree to lift the cap on federally insured deposits from $40,000 to $50,000. The House version of the bill in question held no increase at all. But House Banking Chairman St Germain unexpectedly suggested a "compromise" limit at $100,000 and the Senate conferees quietly gave in. The same auspicious bill also created a commission to phase out limits on the interest federally insured S&Ls could then offer depositors.

Because thrifts had been limited to making home mortgages, which generally brought back fixed interest rates over 20- and 30-year terms, the 1980 legislation put the industry in an economic squeeze. Savings and loans competed for capital by offering higher and higher interest rates, but their returns from mortgages remained constant. As Adams puts it: "As profits vanished, thrifts began dipping into their capital, the money originally put up by the investors and owners when the thrift was formed. This nest egg provided the first line of defense against losses. By 1982, on an industry-wide average, capital was nearly exhausted. Some fifty S&Ls had failed, a shocking number for the time."

A devout Roman Catholic, Keating spent his recreational time harassing pornographers and supporting pro-life causes.

At this point Congress intervened again. This time it addressed only half the problem. The resulting Garn–St Germain Act maintained both federal deposit insurance and the $100,000 limit on insured deposits. But it loosened the leash that had tethered thrifts to the mortgage business and allowed them to gambol forth into direct investments like junk bonds and real estate developments. A year later the California state legislature went even further, knocking down all fences and letting thrifts chartered in the state directly invest up to 100 percent of their assets.

Charlie Keating liked the smell of California's "deregulated" savings and loans. His Phoenix-based real estate company, American Continental Corporation (ACC), started looking to buy one, and in 1984 paid $51 million for Lincoln. Despite the promises Keating made to the state's savings and loans commissioners, he promptly turned the thrift into a machine for generating federally insured brokered deposits that he could convert into venture capital for his Arizona holding company.

Lincoln started offering high interest rates and soliciting national brokers like Drexel Burnham Lambert and Merrill Lynch. The thrift expanded like a white star on its way to becoming a black hole. From the end of 1983 to 1988 its on-paper assets exploded from $1.1 billion to $5.5 billion. Most of this growth was focused in what federal bank examiners call "risk assets": raw land, new construction loans, hotels, and junk bonds. By comparison, Lincoln virtually stopped making mortgages. From 1985 through early 1986, even though it was located in one of the fastest growing housing markets in the country, the thrift made only eleven home loans. Four of them went to its own employees.

Meanwhile in Washington, Edwin Gray, chairman of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, launched a regulatory counteroffensive. Reports had been coming in from the bank board's field officers, especially in California and Texas, that massive and risky direct investments by deregulated thrifts could put the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Company (FSLIC) in serious trouble. In mid-1984, Gray started studying the possibility of imposing a regulatory limit on direct investments. On December 10, a new regulation limiting such investment to 10 percent of a thrift's assets finally took effect.

The limit was a direct threat to Keating's plans for Lincoln. Before the year was out he hatched his own strategy for dealing with the "reregulators." If he could not beat them, he would buy them.

Lawrence Taggart, the California Savings and Loan Commissioner who had failed to check Keating's SEC record before approving his purchase of Lincoln, became the first government official to benefit from Keating's generosity. On December 7, 1984, he signed a state order authorizing Lincoln to make $800 million in direct investments. The resulting investments put the thrift $600 million above the 10 percent federal limitation that was to take effect three days later. Taggart later told the *San Francisco Examiner* that he signed Lincoln's authorization explicitly to beat the deadline.

According to papers filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, when Taggart signed that authorization he had already been hired by a company called TCS Financial. At the time TCS was in bad financial shape. It had lost $716,000 in the previous eighteen months and was still losing money at a rate that would have made it insolvent by March. On January 1, 1985, Taggart resigned as the state thrift commissioner and became TCS's chief executive officer. Two weeks later, Lincoln revitalized TCS by purchasing 587,000 shares in the company for $5 apiece, even though the stock's prospectus boldly warned: "The public offering price of $5 was determined arbitrarily by the Board of Directors. . . . Such offering price bears no relationship to the actual value of the company's assets." The shares are now worth approximately 90 cents apiece.

But the $2.9 million Keating invested in Taggart's TCS was just the down payment in his checkbook war against Ed Gray and the 10-percent rule. Taggart's direct investment authorization was not recognized by the bank board as automatically exempting Lincoln's $800 million from the federal government's restrictions. Nor did the authorization give Lincoln the right to make future direct investments. So Keating now put Alan Greenspan (the current chairman of the Federal Reserve) on the payroll. At the time, Greenspan was an economic adviser to President Reagan.

In February 1985, Greenspan wrote a letter to Thomas Sharkey, Lincoln's principal supervisor in the Federal Home Loan Bank in San Francisco. The letter requested that Lincoln be exempted from the 10-percent rule. Greenspan asserted falsely that Lincoln had put a "high percentage" of its business into residential mortgages, and concluded that Keating, "through skill and expertise," had transformed the thrift "into a financially strong institution that presents no foreseeable risk to the Federal Savings and Loan Deposit Insurance Corporation."

While the bank board was reviewing Lincoln's application for an exemption, Greenspan testified in Congress against the 10-percent rule. The testimony was taken in a Government Operations subcommittee chaired by Rep. Douglas Barnard, a Georgia Democrat who would receive $16,000 in campaign contributions from Keating family and employees.

In March, Frank Annunzio, Henry Gonzalez's erstwhile nemesis who had also taken a $1,000 contribution from Keating, introduced a resolution condemning the 10-percent rule. As many as 224 other congressmen rushed to cosponsor the Annunzio amendment, which was being touted by Keating's personal lobbyists. But the bank board still refused to grant Keating an exemption.

Co-opting bureaucrats became as much a part of Keating's *modus operandi* as handing out campaign contributions. At various points he: (1) hired a San Francisco–based federal bank examiner, (2) paid a $900,000-per-year salary to an accountant he seduced away from the accounting firm Arthur Young immediately after the accountant had written a highly publicized report giving Lincoln a glowing certificate of good health, and (3) retained as an attorney a former California corporation commissioner who had

[1]John Wiley & Sons, $19.95.

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just approved ACC's request to sell uninsured bonds in the lobbies of three Lincoln branches that happened to be located in retirement communities. But Keating's boldest headhunting move came in late 1985 when he tried to make Ed Gray a direct investment.

In September, Washington attorney Raymond Gustini telephoned bank board member Mary Grigsby and told her that Lincoln was interested in hiring Gray. Grigsby told Gray, who referred the matter to the bank board's general counsel Norman Raiden. Raiden and Gray agreed that it looked as if Keating was trying to buy him off the bank board.

To confirm the point, Gray had his assistant Shannon Fairbanks arrange a personal meeting with Keating. At the meeting Keating told Fairbanks he wanted to hire Gray as a public relations officer. But before Keating could mention a salary figure, Fairbanks told him Gray was not interested. In Keating's version of the meeting, Keating changed his mind about offering Gray a job when Fairbanks insisted that Gray would only be interested in a chairmanship or chief executive officer position. Former undersecretary of the Treasury George Gould later told the *American Banker* that during this period Keating visited him at the Treasury one day to lobby against the 10-percent rule and "ranted and raved that Mr. Gray would be the death of the industry." Keating swore to Gould that he was willing to pay Gray, who earned the same salary as a congressman, up to $300,000 a year to get him off the bank board. Gould responded by making sure Keating was declared "persona non grata" at the Treasury Department.

But even as he was being ostracized at the Treasury, Keating gained an ally a few steps away in the White House. In July 1985, Gray was approached by an old friend, John Svahn, who was then serving as assistant to the President for policy development. Svahn told Gray that in a June meeting with Donald Regan, the President's chief of staff had announced, "I want Ed Gray out and I want him out soon."

In September, Gray was summoned to the White House by another old friend, Ed Rollins, who was that day retiring as a special assistant to the President. Rollins told Gray that Regan had been planning to demand Gray's resignation personally. Rollins, however, had talked Regan out of it by promising to deliver the message to Gray himself. Gray asked Rollins if the President knew anything about what was going on. Rollins said, "I'm sure he doesn't." Gray asked, "Well, who's in charge here?" Rollins answered, "Regan. He runs about 80 percent of this place now."

Gray decided that he would not resign unless he determined it was the will of the President himself. He had entered politics two decades earlier to serve as press secretary to then-television personality Ronald Reagan's 1966 California gubernatorial campaign. He had reason to believe his Reaganite credentials were at least as good as Donald Regan's, and that his credentials as the President's personal friend might be even stronger. He asked Rollins if he would be able to get the personal postal code that when enscribed on an envelope allows a letter to pass straight through to the President. Rollins said he thought he could get it for him.

The next day Gray went over to the Justice Department to see another old pal, Ed Meese. He told Meese about his conflict with Regan and that he was thinking about sending a personal letter to the President explaining the problems that the thrift industry was facing and why he was following the policy line he was. Meese told him not to do it. They screened his private mail. A personal letter to Ronald Reagan might as well have been a letter to Donald Regan.

There is no evidence that at this point Charlie Keating and Donald Regan had ever met. They were merely kindred spirits. Regan had left the chairmanship of Merrill Lynch, the nation's pioneer and leading deposit broker, to enter the administration and had been a Garn-St Germain enthusiast in his days as Treasury secretary. But Keating and Regan would soon openly join hands in another campaign to get Ed Gray.

Greenspan asserted falsely that Lincoln had put a "high percentage" of its business into residential mortgages, and concluded that Keating "through skill and expertise" had transformed the thrift "into a financially strong institution . . ."

In March 1986, the Federal Home Loan Bank in San Francisco sent a team of examiners for a routine review of Lincoln's operations. The thrift stonewalled, refusing to give examiners access to necessary documents. But when the exam was completed in October, the San Francisco Home Loan Bank concluded that Lincoln had made at least $600 million in illegal direct investments and that the underwriting for these investments was either severely deficient, nonexistent, or fraudulent. Although an ACC spokesman flatly denies it, bank board officials have repeatedly asserted that Lincoln had even backdated and stuffed files attempting to create retroactively an underwriting history for some of its biggest ventures or to mislead the bank examiners about the actual date of a direct investment.

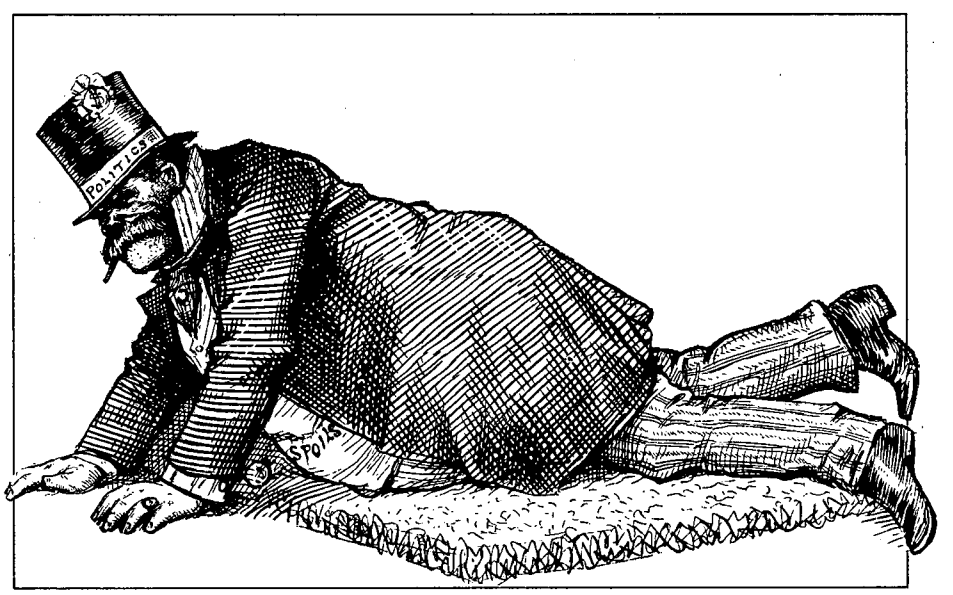
There was nepotism too. Keating's son, for example, had risen from bus boy at a country club to a director of Lincoln's parent, ACC, in just a few years. In 1985, at twenty-six, he was taking down $866,647. Many other Keating family members had similarly massive salaries. The San Francisco bank examiners finally concluded in May 1987 that Lincoln was being operated in an "unsafe and unsound manner" and recommended to the bank board that it be taken into a federal receivership in order to protect FSLIC from massive losses.

Keating responded to the devastating exam by attempting to stack the Federal Home Loan Bank Board itself. Two vacancies were coming up on the three-member board and Keating had some candidates in mind. In August 1986, Lawrence Taggart, the former California thrift commissioner whom Keating had helped, wrote to Donald Regan claiming that Ed Gray's conduct as chairman of the FHLBB was "likely to have a very adverse impact on the ability of our Party to raise campaign funds in the upcoming elections." He warned Regan that it was necessary to appoint new board members who would counteract Gray's anti-business ideology.

The first man Regan considered nominating was George Benston, an economist who had been hired by Lincoln to assist Alan Greenspan in pressing Keating's case against the bank board with Congress. But Benston's nomination was a stillbirth due to vehement opposition from Senate Banking Chairman William Proxmire. So in the fall, Keating returned to Washington and met personally with Donald Regan at the White House. He told Regan that he knew just the man to straighten out the Federal Home Loan Bank Board. It was Lee Henkel, ACC's tax attorney. Henkel was given a recess appointment and joined the bank board in November 1986. Although Henkel was a Georgia Republican, one of his biggest supporters in the U.S. Senate was Dennis DeConcini, the Democrat from Arizona.

What Keating did not tell Regan was that Henkel was a partner in a few real estate deals that held approximately $60 million in loans from Lincoln. Henkel formally recused himself from the bank board's dealings with Lincoln, but at the first board meeting he attended he proposed an amendment to the 10-percent rule that would have legalized Lincoln's disputed investments. A study done by bank board economists later revealed that there was only one other thrift that might have benefited from the change. Henkel was subjected to an ethics review that cleared him of wrongdoing, but he resigned on April Fools' Day 1987 anyway.

His plan to stack the bank board foiled, Keating reached for a higher trump card: the United States Senate. Even before purchasing Lincoln, Keating had spent time and money cultivating a group of congressmen in both parties. In 1981, at a Navy League dinner in Phoenix, he had introduced himself to John McCain, a former Navy pilot who had spent five and a half years in a North Vietnamese



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prison camp, and who was now a potential Republican candidate for the House. Keating flattered McCain on his war record and told him he was the kind of man he would like his family to get to know.

Each summer from 1984-86, after McCain was elected to the House, Keating invited the congressman and his family on vacation trips to the Bahamas. The families flew roundtrip from Phoenix on the ACC corporate jet and stayed at Keating's beachfront estate. McCain never reimbursed Keating for the trips or a number of domestic flights until May of last year. In addition, from 1984 to the present, Keating, his family, and employees of Lincoln and ACC made $101,500 in contributions to McCain's House and Senate campaigns. Still, McCain may be the least indebted of the politicians Keating attempted to enlist as allies in his struggle against the Federal Home Loan Bank Board.

According to an extensive study undertaken by the *Los Angeles Times*, Keating, his family, and seventy-five business associates made more than $700,000 in campaign contributions to state and federal politicians between 1984 and 1989. Other than McCain, the major recipients included Senators Donald Riegle of Michigan ($71,250); Dennis DeConcini of Arizona ($55,000); Alan Cranston of California ($39,100); and John Glenn of Ohio ($34,500).

But these dollar figures include only those contributions that went to the senators' "principal campaign committees," which by law must be publicly reported to the Federal Election Commission in Washington. Keating contributed far more in "soft money," which included direct gifts from American Continental and Lincoln S&L that would have been illegal if given directly to organizations aimed at "influencing a campaign for Federal office." These soft money contributions were channeled into state and national party organizations, political action committees chartered by states, and ostensibly non-partisan, tax-deductible voter-registration drives.

Keating once said of ACC's corporate contributions, "We support and campaign for the political leaders we believe represent the best of American virtues." For Keating, the adamant campaigner against pornography and abortion, this presumably meant Reagan-style conservatives. But Keating never contributed a dime to Ronald Reagan. And he never even gave any soft money to John McCain. Instead he pumped $850,000 into three voter-registration organizations founded by Alan Cranston, the favorite senator of the People for the American Way. Keating also gave $85,000 to the California Democratic party in 1986 to help subsidize Cranston's efforts in an extremely tight re-election campaign against Rep. Ed Zchau. Cranston's voter registration drives, which blatantly targeted only potential Democrats, are now under investigation by the IRS.

John Glenn, the seemingly straight-shooting hero of *The Right Stuff*, also took $200,000 in Keating soft money which was funneled into an Ohio bank account that was not registered with the Federal Election Commission. The contribution was arranged by James Grogan, a former Glenn aide who had moved up to an executive position at ACC. According to FEC spokesman Fred Eiland, there are no federal election laws that limit how Glenn can spend Keating's $200,000 gift. Glenn's organization is subject only to the tax code and the laws restricting fraud.

In some cases, the timing of a Keating contribution was more incriminating than its sheer volume or the nature of the account into which it was paid. On March 23, 1987, for example, Keating hosted a fundraiser for Senator Riegle at ACC's Hotel Pontchartrain in Detroit. At the fundraiser Keating handed Riegle eighty-six checks written by Keating employees and family. They totaled more than $70,000.

Just two weeks before this $70,000 hand-off in Detroit, Ed Gray had visited Riegle at his Capitol Hill office. Gray had hoped to persuade Riegle, who was then heir apparent to retiring Senate banking chairman William Proxmire, to support a bill to recapitalize FSLIC. But Riegle had other business in mind. At the end of the meeting, he pulled Gray aside and asked if he would meet with a group of senators who were upset with the way the bank board was regulating Lincoln. Gray protested but Riegle was persistent. The next day Riegle flew out to Phoenix with Banking Committee staffer Kevin Gottlieb to talk with Keating. On April 2, Gray was summoned to a meeting at Senator DeConcini's office and warned to come alone.

Gray went to the meeting with trepidation. He had never met with a senator without staff present. But he was not the only one who came nervous.

Keating's boldest headhunting move came in late 1985 when he tried to make Edwin Gray a direct investment.

The day after Riegle's fundraiser at the Pontchartrain, Keating had shown up at Senator McCain's Washington office. McCain had been hearing from his staff that Keating was looking to cut a deal with Ed Gray, and as the 6-foot-5 entrepreneurial John Wayne draped himself over a chair in the senator's inner office, McCain feared he was about to hear the details.

He was right. Keating advised his old buddy from Bahama beach days that he was willing to make some concessions to the government if the bank board would just lay off Lincoln. "I can only ask that a constituent is treated fairly," McCain warned his friend. "I won't be your broker."

Keating flew into a rage. He stomped out of McCain's office, declaring in front of shocked staff that the former POW was a "wimp." But, nonetheless, on April 2 McCain headed for Senator DeConcini's office to talk with Ed Gray about the bank board's handling of Lincoln. Like Gray, he had never been to a meeting where multiple U.S. senators confronted a federal regulator. Nor had he ever met a federal regulator without staff present.

On entering the meeting, Gray confronted not only DeConcini and McCain but also Senators Cranston and Glenn. According to Gray, DeConcini promptly offered him a "quid pro quo" on behalf of the senators' "friend at Lincoln Savings and Loan." The deal, as described by Gray, was the same one Keating had laid out for McCain nine days before. McCain at this point told Gray, "We don't want to do anything improper here." Gray explained to DeConcini that he thought the proper course for the bank board was to fight Lincoln in court, and he abruptly declined to make a deal.

He then told the senators that as chairman of the bank board he was not personally familiar with the details of the Lincoln case. He told them that if they wanted to be briefed on the matter he could arrange for them to meet with regulators from the San Francisco Federal Home Loan Bank. A meeting was later arranged for the following week.

When the San Francisco regulators showed up at DeConcini's office on April 9, the original group of four had been augmented by Senator Riegle. Once again there were no staff present. But William Black, the San Francisco bank's chief counsel, took detailed notes. The notes are so accurate, in fact, that some of the senators now believe Black used a hidden tape recorder.

DeConcini started the meeting apparently following a set of guidelines from a memo prepared by his aide Laurie Sedlmayr. The memo laid out "What American Continental wants from Gray for concessions" and "What American Continental is willing to do." It too mirrored the deal Keating had mentioned to McCain on March 24. Now DeConcini was presenting the San Francisco regulators with more or less the same bargain. This time he suggested "forbearance" for Lincoln. McCain again followed DeConcini by announcing, "I wouldn't want any special favors for them. . . . I don't want any part of our conversation to be improper." Glenn, who had entered the room late, summed up his position, "You should charge them or get off their backs."

The San Francisco regulators then tried to summarize Lincoln's problems: more than half a billion in illegal, risky direct investments, bad or even non-existent underwriting, suspect accounting. DeConcini responded, "What's wrong with this if they're willing to clean up their act?" The regulators then told the senators about Lincoln's file stuffing and backdating. Glenn asked, "Have you done anything about these violations of law?"

Michael Patriarca, the San Francisco enforcement chief, responded: "We're sending a criminal referral to the Department of Justice. Not maybe, we're sending one. . . . I can't tell you strongly enough how serious this is."

That revelation persuaded Glenn and Riegle summarily to cut all their ties to Charlie Keating. McCain had already severed his when Keating had stomped out of his office crying "wimp." But DeConcini continued for two more years to lobby for Keating with the Federal Home Loan Bank Board and California thrift regulators, and within weeks Cranston was soliciting Keating for the first installment on the $850,000 in soft money mentioned above.

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"There's a war going on here." That is the way one Banking Committee staffer described the committee's internal politics this past fall as a series of hearings probing the $2.5 billion collapse of Lincoln Savings and Loan began drawing to a climax. The disgust some senior Democrats harbored for Henry Gonzalez bubbled forth in public bursts of barely tempered rage. Republicans as right as Toby Roth seemed strangely reborn as partisans of a chairman whose "liberal" rating from the ADA is 100 percent.

On the morning of November 11, Gonzalez planned to take sworn testimony from Ed Gray in what was described as a public hearing. The committee's hearing room in the Rayburn Building was packed with print reporters, SEC officials, FBI agents, officers of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, correspondents from radio and television, and superfluous committee staffers. Each group had been carefully segregated into special seating sections laid out by Gonzalez's crack crew of press flacks, who scurried back and forth frenetically handing out massive folios of xeroxed evidence. From the hearing room's front wall, over Gonzalez's shoulder, a larger-than-life portrait of Fernand St Germain looked down on the proceedings.

Had an ordinary American stumbled into the building that day, he might have thought Ollie North was making an appearance, or that the House Un-American Activities Committee had finally reconvened. But paying taxes would not have been sufficient credentials to get him through the door to see the show. All seats had been reserved for the nomenklatura.

Gray had provided the committee with written testimony. It pointedly reiterated the allegation that Senator DeConcini, in the presence of three other senators, had offered him a "quid pro quo" on Keating's behalf. The "affair was similar in many ways," Gray opined, to the efforts former Speaker Jim Wright had made to intimidate him into laying off insolvent Texas thrifts.

A predictable torrent of publicity about Gray's allegations followed the day's testimony and with that flood the course of events was irrevocably swept beyond the reach of Henry Gonzalez. Gonzalez had taken aim at the Federal Home Loan Bank Board's handling of the Lincoln case hoping to shoot down M. Danny Wall, the former Republican staff director of the Senate Banking Committee who had replaced Ed Gray as chairman of the bank board in July 1987. Gonzalez rightly held Wall responsible for allowing Lincoln to continue in business for two years after the San Francisco regulators had recommended a receivership. A socialist bitter ender, Gonzalez also hoped to discredit free enterprise generally, which he seemed to equate with a thrift industry run on government-guaranteed capital.

But Gray's allegations retargeted the collective artillery of the media away from Wall, who shortly resigned, and squarely on the Keating Five. Opportunistic Republicans began to wonder if the career of Sen. John McCain might not be an acceptable price to pay for taking out four Democratic senators. Democrats, meanwhile, struggled mightily to exploit Wall's disgrace by heaping blame on the Reagan-Bush Administrations for the still-escalating cost of the thrift crisis.

The pursuit of prudent public policy was at best an incidental question in the politics that ensued from the Lincoln case and the thrift crisis in general. As James Ring Adams writes in *The Big Fix*, the first politician to sell out on the issue of federal deposit insurance had been Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In his first press conference in 1933, Roosevelt had said, "As to guaranteeing bank deposits, the minute government starts to do that . . . the government runs into a probable loss. We do not wish to make the United States government liable for the mistakes and errors of individual banks, and put a premium on unsound banking in the future." But a few months later Roosevelt signed the Glass-Steagall Act creating the FDIC, and a year after that pushed through the National Housing Act that established FSLIC.

In 1989, Congress passed and George Bush signed the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery and Enforcement Act, committing the government to bail out the thrift industry at a cost to taxpayers of up to $300 billion over the next thirty years. But no serious thought was given by either Republicans or Democrats to eliminating the root cause of the problem, which remained Roosevelt's deposit insurance.

The government kept the door to the federal treasury slightly ajar, and another generation of Charlie Keatings will some day come and pry it open. When they do there will be plenty of men like Fernand St Germain, Jim Wright, Dennis DeConcini, Donald Riegle, and Alan Cranston to help them do it. There will also be little men like Henry Gonzalez, who pride themselves on being populists, but insist on tagging special interest amendments for banker friends even onto $300 billion bailout bills. □

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CONGRESS IN CRISIS

David Brock

THE PRINCE METTERNICHS OF CONGRESS

They undercut the President's leadership in foreign policy at every opportunity, to the detriment of our nation's interests and political stability. But there are ways to contain these kingpins, and unlike his predecessor, George Bush has shown a willingness to defend the foreign policy prerogatives of the executive branch.

With Marcos and now Pinochet gone, Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko is the world leader with the worst image on Capitol Hill. It's not that he's more odious than any other African dictator, and in fact a persuasive case can be made that, for all his faults, Mobutu is one of the few African leaders deserving of U.S. support. Mobutu condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan when others were silent; he followed Washington's lead in boycotting the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow; and he sent his troops into Chad to thwart Libyan aggression. In 1989, Mobutu brought together for the first time Angolan President Eduardo dos Santos and the U.S.-backed rebel leader Jonas Savimbi (whom Mobutu also has helped) for talks on ending Angola's civil war. Zaire has granted U.S. forces access to an important southern air base, no doubt in part because his country is surrounded by what Mobutu, in a flash of unfashionable rhetoric, calls "menacing Red states."

Of course, it is precisely this list of accomplishments as a U.S. ally in the region that has earned Mobutu the unending ire of Capitol Hill, or, more precisely, the ire of those on the Hill who matter most when it comes to U.S. policy on Africa. ("Most members couldn't find Zaire on a map," one House Foreign Affairs aide assures me.) The group is small, and includes Rep. Howard Wolpe (D-Mich.), chairman of the House subcommittee on Africa; Steve Weissman, the committee staff director; Rep. David Obey (D-Wisc.), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Foreign Operations; Rep. Ronald V. Dellums (D-Calif.), an outspoken member of the Congressional Black Caucus; and Dellums aide Bob Brauer. They in turn are affected mightily by the Rainbow Lobby, a New York-based anti-Mobutu outfit. This crowd's basic beef is simple enough: they don't like U.S. policy on Africa, of which Zaire is a lynchpin. And since they cannot win a fair and square policy victory—for example, ending U.S. aid to Savimbi's UNITA—they beat up on Mobutu and run Africa policy on the sly through a cornucopia of legislative restrictions.

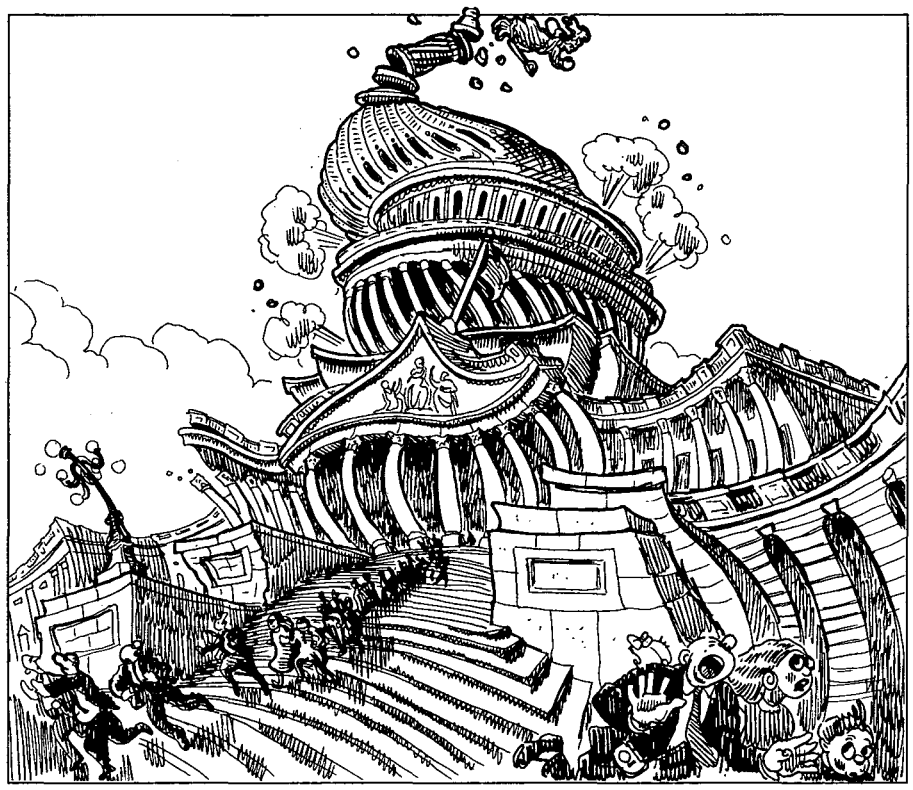
The Bush Administration proposed $9 million in military aid and $49 million in development aid for Zaire in the 1990 fiscal year. The military aid was to go for maintenance of U.S. equipment in Zaire, especially C-130 transport planes; the economic aid was to be channeled through "private voluntary organizations," or PVOs. The administration's program had none of the money passing through the hands of Zaire's government, to ameliorate critics' concerns about corruption. To underscore the importance of the U.S.-Zaire relationship, Bush decided that Mobutu would be the first African leader he received on a State visit (in June).

Meanwhile, the anti-Mobutu people marshaled their forces. In April, the Rainbow Lobby prevailed upon Brauer to have Dellums introduce a bill prohibiting military aid. "It does not benefit the United States to be identified with such a corrupt and repressive regime," the bill stated. Zaire's population is living "in a state of permanent insecurity as a result of extortion and brutality" by government officials and army officers, and human rights abuses are "significant," it claimed. The bill was introduced on the heels of a February report by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights that cited Zaire for its improving human rights record and found that no further investigation was warranted.

But then Mobutu's opponents in Washington seem more interested in winning control of U.S. Africa policy by any means necessary than they are in realities on the ground in Zaire. This zeal emanates from a variety of sources, personal and political. Weissman, the committee staff director, was thrown out of Zaire by Mobutu's government for publicly criticizing the government when he was a Peace Corps volunteer in the 1960s, and he has harbored a grudge ever since. His boss, Wolpe, has said he won't change his tune on Zaire until Mobutu quits, and won't even consider talking to the man. Dellums and Obey, along with most of the Black Caucus, are against any military aid to Africa, or anywhere in the Third World, for any reason.

The Rainbow Lobby, which had an operating budget of more than half a million dollars in 1988, raised almost entirely on the anti-Mobutu cause, is not known for a nuanced approach to the issue either, though it does have a flair for disciplining congressmen who waver from its position. In July, a 28-year-old Peace Corps volunteer in Zaire gave an interview to the *Washington Post* in which she claimed that Rep. Gus Savage (D-Ill.) had sexually assaulted her while he was on a fact-finding trip to Zaire in March. Africa-watchers in Washington say that Savage, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus who was considering breaking ranks and coming out in favor of aid for Mobutu last year, was the unsuspecting target of a sting operation. They say Savage was encouraged to make advances in the back seat of his chauffeur-driven U.S. Embassy car by the woman, who volunteered to accompany Savage on a tour of Kinshasa's nightlife after being told he wanted a briefing on the corps' work in Africa. The woman—who then blew the whistle—is said to be a member of the Rainbow Lobby and a lesbian to boot. Entangled in an ongoing ethics investigation, Savage has had nothing subsequent to say about Zaire.

When the foreign aid authorization came up for House consideration,



David Brock is a senior editor of Insight *magazine. This is the third in a series of* TAS *articles on the Great American Congress in Crisis.*

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Wolpe and Weissman put a cap on military aid to Zaire at $3 million. They also inserted a clause denying on human rights grounds any Economic Support Fund (ESF) money to Zaire (cash grants that go directly to the government, as opposed to development aid). Zaire's Washington lobbyist, van Kloberg & Associates, tried to get the cap lifted in the Senate, but failed on an 11-7 vote in the Foreign Relations committee. In Obey's appropriations subcommittee, the $3 million cap was also written in, after a barrage from the Rainbow Lobby. Says one House subcommittee aide: "I can tell you the Rainbow Lobby made tons of calls up here. They sent tons of paper. Somehow it's hard to imagine that someone in your district is actually a member of the Rainbow Lobby. But it is effective." Van Kloberg won a major victory, however, in getting Senators Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Bob Kasten (R-Wisc.), the ranking members of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, to lift the military aid cap and remove the ESF prohibition. But in the House-Senate appropriations conference, Wolpe and Obey pressed for no military aid to Zaire and van Kloberg somehow managed to work out a compromise, the $3 million cap.

The bottom line, says Jim Woods, deputy assistant secretary of defense for Africa: "At $3 million, we can't do the maintenance on our five C-130 planes. We can't really do much." And Zaire may not even get $3 million, which after all is only a cap. In 1989, Congress earmarked—set aside specifically in law—only $25 million in military aid for sub-Saharan Africa, down from a high of $200 million in 1982, when the hard left had relatively less sway in certain congressional subcommittees; of the $25 million, $15 million was earmarked for Kenya "because they had a good lobbyist" (Neale & Co.), Woods observes. (Kenya is an easier account than Zaire, for despite the fact that Kenya has a worse human rights problem, the president of Kenya does not have the pro-U.S. credentials that outrage certain Democrats.) That left the Reagan Administration with $10 million for the rest of the region, so Zaire didn't even get $3 million. The $9 million Bush request for 1990 would have fallen short, too, Woods says, but winning the full amount would have been a symbolic victory for Mobutu and his pro-U.S. policies. Mobutu can make up the difference with his vast personal wealth, but the U.S. restrictions make him a pariah nonetheless.

The most troubling aspect of the Zaire story (to those who would like to see coherence in U.S. foreign policy, anyway) is that it is not an anomaly. It is merely one small example of the way an aggrandizing Congress, manipulated by single-issue lobbies, is running foreign policy at the expense of the constitutionally mandated authority of the executive branch. Yet to say that Congress "runs" policy is to give too much credit; Congress does not have one foreign policy in opposition to the executive's. Though by now it is a cliché, the best way to put it is that Congress has 535 Secretaries of State, each with his own foreign policy.

This being the case, Congress rarely accepts the institutional responsibility for reversing the policy intentions of the President outright. When it does, by tightening the federal purse strings or nixing a treaty, it is exercising a legitimate function. Sometimes, as when Congress voted to cut off aid to the Nicaraguan contras time and again in the Reagan years, a policy of vacillation results. (The Senate had twenty roll call votes on contra aid in 1987 alone.) But that lamentable situation is preferable to a more damaging institutional tendency: many members of Congress on the losing side of (or having conceded) a policy battle with the executive seek to micromanage or otherwise interfere with the policy to undermine it. This is dangerous when, as is often the case, a tiny minority of congressmen and their unelected aides usurp the powers of both the President and indeed of the Congress as a whole by negotiating with foreign powers, sitting on presidential appointments, or writing into law onerous reporting requirements, human rights restrictions, economic and trade sanctions, earmarks, policy riders to appropriations bills, legislative vetoes, and other specific administrative provisions—all without open debate or clear up-or-down votes. During the 1980s alone, Congress enacted more than 100 such legislative mechanisms on foreign policy that proscribed presidential authority, according to the Congressional Research Service.

Because it has no domestic constituency to act as a brake on congressional meddling, foreign aid is the most common vehicle for congressional abuse of power. A report issued by the U.S. Agency for International Development documents the scope of the problem. AID said the more than 500 pages of foreign aid legislation that have accumulated since 1961 contain ambiguous, contradictory, and obsolete provisions. Further, Congress has earmarked so much foreign aid spending that the administration has little flexibility: the proportion of Economic Support Funds —about one-third of the total foreign aid budget—over which AID has spending discretion dropped from 44 percent in 1985 to two percent in 1989. This means that administrators are busy meeting congressional spending mandates rather than determining who needs how much aid. The agency said its managers spend too much time writing required reports to Congress —288 a year, and 700 additional "official notifications" of even minor changes in cost or administrative detail —and too little time evaluating the direction and impact of programs.

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Even some members of Congress realize how irresponsibly they've behaved. A bipartisan congressional task force reported last year that Congress earmarks 98 percent of total foreign aid, leaving the programs "hamstrung." Earmarks give Congress an array of carrots and sticks with which to run independent foreign policies: they also reduce the executive's flexibility to shift aid priorities in response to changing international circumstances during the fiscal year. Rep. Dante Fascell (D-Fla.) led a reform effort, as chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, during consideration of the foreign aid authorization bill for 1990. Disgusted with the way outside groups lobby members to fund pet programs or punish governments they don't like, Fascell proposed eliminating many earmarks and pruning the 500 pages of authorizing language. "We got a very good bill through the committee that was then disassembled by the subcommittee chairmen," says one House Foreign Affairs Committee aide. "You had people like [New York Democrat Rep. Stephen] Solarz [chairman of the subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific] insisting on his earmarks, like $575 million for Pakistan. After all, who would Solarz be without his aid programs?" (Solarz and Senate Foreign Relations committee staffer Peter Galbraith did everything they could to bring Pakistani President Benazir Bhutto to power and have backed her to the hilt since.)

Lee Hamilton, chairman of the subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, moved $1 billion in ESF money into the development aid account (this goes to PVOs with clout on the Hill). He also stuck in a protectionist requirement that countries receiving cash grants under ESF agree to buy an equivalent amount of U.S. products and services and ship at least half of those products on U.S.-flagged carriers. Restrictions on military aid to El Salvador—an annual cap of $85 million, divided into two installments, and timed to coincide with two reports from President Bush on the human rights situation, prospects for a negotiated settlement to the civil war, and progress on a probe into the bombing of a union hall—were tacked on by Rep. George Crockett (D-Mich.), chairman of the subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere (his more stringent provisions didn't pass).

Though more tempting for members of the party that does not control the executive, micromanagement knows no party bounds, and House Republicans were quick to get in on the act when the bill reached the floor. Members proposed more than 170 amendments; these were then boiled down by Fascell staffers into "en bloc" amendments that were adopted by voice vote. Among them were requirements that the secretary of state report to Congress on compliance by the Nicaraguan government with its June 1979 pledge to respect human rights and hold free elections (initiated by Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind.); that aid to Mozambique "bear a relation to" government talks with the Renamo rebels (also by Burton); and that 40 percent of Ecuador's aid be withheld until that country removes derogatory references to the U.S. in a mural in its Plenary Hall of Congress (by Rep. James Inhofe, R-Ok.).

The few Fascell reforms that remained in the House version of the authorization bill were enough to set off alarm bells in the Senate. Committee aides say Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-Md.), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations committee, declared that he'd rather kill the bill than have to give up some earmarks in a House-Senate conference. He convinced his committee colleagues to do just that. But the committee got its crack at making foreign policy in the State Department's authorization bill for 1990. In all, the Senate considered seventy-eight amendments to the measure, which as adopted required the President to place economic sanctions on China; to open a consulate in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia; to

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appoint no administrator for the Panama Canal until Panama holds a free election; to organize an international conference to promote "clean coal" technology; to refuse to negotiate with the PLO; to "facilitate the international conservation of sea turtles"; to fund the Committee on the Ukraine Famine; and to warn South Korea against trading sensitive technology in a U.S. jet-fighter deal.

Foreign aid policy is set in what is known as the authorizing process, while the actual money spent is determined in the appropriations process. As in 1989, it is not unusual for the aid program to go forward without an authorizing bill, but if this is the case, the appropriating committees have the sole power to earmark. From 1981 to 1988, Congress passed only two foreign aid authorizations (in 1981 and 1985) owing to the Reagan Administration's penchant for end-running the authorization process in favor of the appropriations committees. The Senate appropriations subcommittee was chaired first by Kasten and then by Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii), both sympathetic to Reagan's foreign aid agenda. But faced with Leahy and Obey, the Bush people decided to try their luck in the authorizing committees last year. Though that effort was derailed, the restrictions passed by the House authorization were reflected in the final $14.4 billion foreign aid appropriations bill.

During the conference on the bill, however, another pitched battle erupted over spending levels and earmarks. Overall, the measure provided $500 million less than Bush requested, with major cuts in economic and military aid to U.S. allies. The bill earmarked all but $546 million of $3.2 billion in economic aid and all but $355 million of $4.7 billion in military aid. Obey deleted a $42.5 million earmark for aid to Tunisia favored by Inouye, in revenge for a $20 million earmark for military aid to Jordan that Inouye, now chairman of the Senate defense appropriations subcommittee, put in the defense bill at Bush's request. The provision normally would come under the jurisdiction of Obey, who opposed the Jordan earmark but couldn't do anything to stop it. Conferees also eliminated an earmark of $440 million for the Central America democracies favored by Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.) as a way of ensuring that aid for Costa Rica was not cut by the administration.

During the 1980s alone, according to the Congressional Research Service, Congress enacted more than 100 legislative mechanisms on foreign policy that proscribed presidential authority.

It certainly wasn't the first time Obey and two aides, Mark Murray and Terry Peel, used the foreign operations subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over foreign aid, export finance, and other international trade matters, to manage their own foreign policy and to punish foreign governments for pursuing policies they don't like. Soon after the Salvadoran earthquake in 1986 that left 300,000 homeless, the Reagan Administration added $150 million in earthquake assistance to its foreign aid request. Unfortunately for El Salvador, then-President Jose Napoleon Duarte favored the U.S. government's policy in Central America of funding the contras to press Nicaragua to democratize; Obey and many other Democrats favored neither the means nor the ends of the policy. When the bill came up, Obey took $50 million away from El Salvador and $10 million in ESF money from Honduras (another country supporting the U.S. position) and split the $60 million between Costa Rica and Guatemala, countries with a softer line on the Sandinistas.

According to a former high-level U.S. official who was privy to Salvadoran diplomatic cables between Washington and San Salvador, El Salvador's ambassador in Washington wrote to Duarte that he was told by an Obey staffer: "Tell your president that we reward peacemakers and punish warmongers." In another instance in 1986, Obey held up delivery for months of four Hughes helicopters used by El Salvador for non-lethal spotting and reconnaissance, despite congressional approval of a military aid package. Obey cited human rights abuses by the government. "The irony is that the helicopters helped prevent indiscriminate warfare by ensuring civilians were not in the area," says the former U.S. official.

Though Obey often is unable to enact his preferences into law, threats from the congressman and his staff are enough to scare foreign governments into line. In 1987, Obey aide Murray told Honduran President Azcona that U.S. aid would be cut off if he took a pro-contra stance at an upcoming conference of Central American presidents. "Everybody always wondered why the leaders down there privately supported the contras but would never say so publicly," says the former official. This year, after the election of conservative Alfredo Cristiani as El Salvador's president, Obey quietly moved to scotch the country's Most Favored Nation trade status. Says one former Hill aide: "Trade with the U.S. supports 50 percent of the Salvadoran economy. This would have devastated foreign currency earnings. So a victory [by the Marxist FMLN] that can't be won on the battlefield is won by destroying the economy." Obey wasn't able to bring this off, but his proposal pressured the Cristiani government to negotiate in circumstances favorable to the FMLN and helped spread a virulent strain of foreign policy micromanagement mixed with trade protectionism.

Such crude and cowardly blustering by individual congressmen or their aides tends to intimidate small countries or fragile governments dependent on U.S. support—which explains why remote "regional conflicts," in addition to their ideological appeal, lend themselves more to freelancing by members of Congress than do U.S. relations with, say, the European allies or the Soviet Union. These sorts of activities are unprecedented in the history of the Congress; they are not an extension of the prominent foreign policy role once played by legislators like Sen. Henry "Scoop" Jackson, who adhered to the concept of "loyal opposition" in the traditional sense and employed straightforward means to influence policy. Today's congressional efforts are politely called "personal diplomacy," though in an earlier era they might have been more properly identified as treason. Fundamentally, such personal diplomacy amounts to taking the side of enemy governments or movements against U.S. policy, and more generally against democratic values, and then lying about it in the language of "human rights."

A flying platoon of congressional Democrats has been intimately involved in Central America in the past decade. Most prominent has been Senator Dodd, whose personal negotiating among contending Central American states resulted in the 1989 Tela accord, nicknamed "the Dodd plan" in the region. It called for disbanding the contras prior to a Nicaraguan election in February. From Contadora, through the Esquipulas accords, Costa Rican President Arias's peace plans, to Tela, the end game of Dodd and the likes of Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Rep. David Bonior (D-Mich.), Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), and their aides, was to get the Central American democratic leaders to water down requirements that the Sandinistas democratize while eliminating the contras as a force. One former U.S. official says that after talking with Dodd, President Duarte would "use the phrase 'Chris Dodd suggests on behalf of Ortega.'" In 1987, Harkin tried to get *La Prensa* publisher Violetta Chamorro to reopen the paper—giving the world the impression that the Sandinistas were reforming—but Harkin asked her to accept prior Sandinista censorship. (Chamorro refused.) Victor Johnson, staff director of Rep. Crockett's subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, pressured Nicaraguan oppositionists Alfredo Cesar and Alfonso Robelo to reintegrate themselves into Nicaragua without any guarantees for free expression, again to give the false appearance of Sandinista liberalization. Bonior and Johnson regularly showed up at regional diplomatic meetings, pushing the Sandinista

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position to the other Central American delegations, according to U.S. aides who also attended. The most famous instance of a U.S. official treading water for the Sandinistas, of course, is former House Speaker Jim Wright's maneuverings in the summer of 1988. Wright cleared in advance through Nicaraguan Ambassador Carlos Tunnerman the contents of the Reagan-Wright peace plan, then double-crossed the administration by embracing an even more toothless plan put forth by Arias.

Dodd used micromanagement both ways: To get Honduras to sign off on the Esquipulas plan, he promised he'd unblock some $70 million in economic aid withheld by AID because local Honduran agencies weren't complying with congressional administrative guidelines. To manipulate Arias (he wavered between a hard and soft line on Nicaragua) Dodd, a member of the U.S. Senate Committee to Observe the Central American Peace Accords, threatened Arias with release of a report alleging gross human rights abuses in Costa Rica, a former aide to the committee says. (The dubious information was fed to Dodd staffers by the pro-Sandinista Mexican Foreign Ministry.) In a Dodd-Harkin bullying session before the 1988 U.S. presidential elections, the senators told Honduran officials that they had better shut down contra refugee camps before Michael Dukakis became President and forced them to do so.

Dodd and aides Janice O'Connell and Bob Dockeray excluded U.S. Embassy officials from their meetings with foreign leaders and kept the Reagan Administration in the dark as to the substance of their talks. Last July, Dodd refused to permit the U.S. chargé d'affaires in Managua to attend a meeting he had with President Daniel Ortega. After the meeting, Dodd praised Sandinista preparations for February's election. On an earlier trip to Honduras, Dodd insisted that he see President Jose Azcona without U.S. Ambassador Everett Briggs present. Wise to Dodd's antics, Briggs saw to it that no private meeting took place. When Bush nominated Briggs to be ambassador to Brazil last spring, a livid Dodd told Secretary of State James Baker that he'd fight the nomination, and Baker withdrew it. In a more venal vein, O'Connell, Dodd's aide on the Foreign Relations committee, made sure that the committee sat on the promotion of the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador because the U.S. ambassador there had not seated her at Duarte's table at an official dinner. Republicans, too, freelanced in Central America. Dodd and Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) collaborated on an amendment to the 1987 Foreign Assistance Act that removed congressional personnel from the purview of the U.S. Embassy when visiting a foreign country. This followed an effort by U.S. officials in El Salvador to get Helms aide Deborah DeMoss thrown out of the country for conspiring with right-winger Roberto D'Aubuisson. Former Rep. Jack Kemp also ruffled the U.S. Embassy's feathers by holding private meetings with Salvadoran oppositionists in an attempt to get them to unify behind one presidential candidate.

Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) has used his post as chairman of the Subcommittee on Narcotics, Terrorism and International Affairs to issue mendacious smears against his political enemies in Central America (not coincidentally, these were often friends of the U.S. government). The flimsy drug-smuggling charges he leveled against the contras have been widely publicized. Last June, Kerry sought to discredit the opposition Social-Christian Unity party (PUSC) in Costa Rica to boost the re-election prospects of Arias's National Liberation party (NLP). Kerry aides, who go on many fishing expeditions in Central America, had gotten word that Jose Blandon, a former aide to Panama's Manuel Noriega, was willing to testify that PUSC candidates had received money from Noriega in the 1985 elections. Kerry brought Blandon to Washington and took his closed-door testimony (with no Republicans present). Much to Kerry's consternation, Blandon testified that both PUSC and Arias's NLP had received Noriega money. Kerry tried to put his own spin on the story by sending to NLP headquarters in San Jose a telefax from his office leaking only the information damaging to PUSC. The information was then leaked to the Costa Rican press. Five opposition legislators have addressed a complaint to Congress about the "unacceptable behavior by Sen. John Kerry and his staff in Costa Rica's internal political affairs."

El Salvador's ambassador in Washington wrote to Duarte that he was told by an Obey staffer: "Tell your president that we reward peacemakers and punish warmongers."

An even more recent case of personal diplomacy involves the efforts of Rep. Wolpe, chairman of the House Africa subcommittee, to subvert U.S. policy in Angola by going further than Moscow to prop up the sickly Marxist regime there. In the first half of 1989, Zaire's Mobutu had made substantial progress as a go-between for Angola's President dos Santos and Savimbi's UNITA rebels in talks to end the war. The Cuban troop withdrawal in February had convinced dos Santos to seek a settlement with UNITA. But the peace process foundered this fall after a meeting between dos Santos and Mobutu ended with dos Santos reverting to a hard-line stance of no negotiations. Diplomatic sources in Washington say dos Santos told Mobutu that he had been told by Wolpe that there was no longer any need to accommodate his political opponents, because Wolpe finally had secured the votes to cut off U.S. aid to Savimbi next time the issue comes up.

If Wolpe followed the strategy of Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W. Va.), however, he would not need a majority vote of any committee to settle a regional dispute in favor of Communist rule. Byrd, egged on by aide Ed King (who also worked with Wright on Central America), inserted a secret appendix to the 1990 defense appropriations bill that prohibits the expenditure of Central Intelligence Agency contingency funds to arm non-Communist guerrillas in Cambodia without the specific approval of Congress. Such approval is not ordinarily required; the only law governing the use of such funds is notification by the administration to congressional intelligence committees. When the administration raised the possibility of covert military aid to the guerrillas in May, intelligence committee opponents of the aid told administration officials they would not keep the program secret, according to committee sources. One committee aide says: "If a vote goes against you, you're supposed to keep quiet. But what happens is they get their way through threats." So Bush decided to put the program on hold, though he wanted to keep open the option, now precluded by Byrd, especially in the face of sharp increases of Soviet funds to the Vietnamese-installed regime of Hun Sen.

Intelligence operations, understood for nearly a quarter of a century to lie within the realm of the executive, are another area ripe for usurpation of executive authority, if only because of their confidential nature. Legitimate oversight responsibilities often devolve into leaks and threat of leaks of covert operations and tortured exchanges of "letters of understanding" between the committees and the administration, not to mention new laws, regulations, and reporting requirements. In mid-1988, the chairman and ranking minority member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Senators David Boren (D-Ok.) and William Cohen (R-Maine), raised objections to an administration plan to support coup-plotters in Panama. The senators sent the White House a letter arguing that the CIA had an obligation to prevent an assassination of a foreign leader (Noriega) if foreigners recruited as agents by the U.S. tried to carry one out. This was their extrapolation from an executive order barring U.S. involvement in assassinations that was issued in 1976 by President Ford and reaffirmed by his successors. The Boren-Cohen letter was interpreted in the executive as requiring the CIA to warn Noriega about even potential assassination dangers arising from the plans of people working with U.S. intelligence to oust him. Writing back to

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the committees, Gen. Colin Powell, at the time Reagan's national security adviser, made this understanding clear. When the Bush Administration cited this de facto congressional management as one of the reasons for its failure to back a coup attempt against Noriega in October, Boren, apparently accustomed to power without responsibility, cried foul. And he refused to release the correspondence that could have made the administration's case. "If Mr. Boren would release those letters, they would be very revealing, and very damaging to the case that Congress was not to blame," says the committee aide.

As it turns out, objections to a U.S. effort to oust Noriega were emanating from the House intelligence committee through the fall of 1988 as well. One committee member says: "Before the last election, the administration had some things underway. The Senate and House committees were very concerned and expressed their concerns. What they were really afraid of was that the U.S. would get rid of Noriega and give the election to Bush. Dukakis would be finished. So domestic politics was put above our foreign policy."

Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), an astute critic of congressional overstepping, has written of "self-righteous second-guessing of presidential decisions . . . which flows from the fact that micromanagement fundamentally involves a capricious process of applying shifting standards to basic rules of conduct." One such rule was the subject of negotiations between the Senate intelligence committee and the White House throughout most of 1989. In 1988, a statement by Speaker Wright linking the activities of the Nicaraguan opposition to the CIA fouled the air for intelligence "reform," and a bill requiring that the President notify the intelligence panels within forty-eight hours of approving any covert action died in the House (after passing the Senate). Current law requires only "timely notification"; the Reagan Administration stretched this to ten months in the case of arms sales to Iran. Last year, Bush negotiated with Senators Boren and Cohen and agreed in an October 30 letter to disclose within forty-eight hours all covert operations while reserving the right to withhold notification for as long as he feels necessary in "special cases." The senators then dropped the 48-hour notification from the 1990 intelligence bill. Many in the intelligence community fear that the letter could come back to haunt Bush, should he withhold notification; the committee, applying Hyde's "shifting standards," could challenge Bush's claim that the particular circumstance warranted delay. "Only time will tell how long the committee will buy such compromises," says one committee aide.

The intelligence bill contained another measure opposed by the administration that requires appointment of an outside inspector general—confirmed by and accountable to Congress—for the CIA. Director William Webster argued that giving an inspector full access to agency files will impair seriously the agency's ability to recruit agents and get cooperation from friendly governments. The law mandates such access; the director can withhold documents only if he notifies Congress and explains why. In opposing the measure, Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.) said: "To get information, and to be able to act on the information we do get, we need the most energetic and entrepreneurial intelligence service which patriotism and dedication to duty can buy and trust can maintain. We do not need the CIA to be a group of cautious bureaucrats who avoid the risks that come with taking action, who fill out every form in triplicate." Congressional oversight taken to an extreme already has practically paralyzed the agency. Says one former Reagan CIA official: "They send you a list of 106 questions they want answered by 9:00 the next morning. You do nothing else."

Considering the gamut of executive-legislative turf battles in 1989, however, Bush appears to be serious about his campaign pledge, an implicit criticism of Reagan, to protect the powers of the presidency in the face of the congressional putsch. The point man on this score is Bush's White House counsel, C. Boyden Gray, who made headlines last year with a public criticism of a deal made between Secretary Baker and congressional committee chairmen, notably Rep. Obey, that made continued humanitarian aid to the contras subject to a legislative veto by the chairmen of four committees. The deal was attacked by many conservatives as the greatest giveaway of presidential power in recent memory, but it kept the aid flowing.

Baker's worrisome propensity to gain policy ground by compromising on the principles of presidential prerogative did not carry the day with Bush in other cases. This was evident in the closing days of the congressional session, when the White House vetoed several measures on the grounds that they unconstitutionally impinged on executive foreign policy powers, bringing to ten the number of vetoes (all sustained) issued last year by the White House. Among these were the State Department authorization bill and the foreign aid appropriation bill, both of which would have written into law one of the primary Democratic agenda items of the post Iran-contra period: criminalization as the final step in the assault on the executive. The State Department bill contained an amendment crafted by Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) that would have barred any official of the executive branch from aiding with privately collected money a foreign government or group for which U.S. aid had been banned. Violation of the prohibition would have been punishable by up to five years in prison and/or a fine. Bush vetoed the measure. The foreign aid bill contained similar language intended to stop the administration from holding out the prospect of U.S. aid as an inducement for foreign countries to promote activities that the administration was barred by Congress from promoting. After a Bush veto, the criminal sanctions were dropped and the President signed it.

An informal working group chaired by White House Counsel C. Boyden Gray is meeting weekly to consider ways to enhance the executive's position.

In his West Wing office in late November, a battle-weary Boyden Gray tells me: "Our commitment was to withstand further erosion of presidential power and to get back some of the power lost. To the extent that we have halted a trend, we may have regained some momentum. The question is: Do you win by not losing? In virtually every case, we got what we wanted." This is a marked difference from the weakening of the presidency in the Reagan years, most importantly in the executive's failure to challenge through a veto or a court fight the vaguely worded Boland amendments, which ultimately ensnared the White House in the Iran-contra fiasco.[1] Reagan on the one hand was unwilling to confront Congress over the issue of usurpation and on the other hand was unwilling or unable to persuade lawmakers of the correctness of his policies or reach effective compromises. Bush seems to understand the importance of both, consulting and compromising more with Congress but knowing when to just say no. Expect more of the latter this year than last. An informal working group chaired by Gray is meeting weekly to consider ways to enhance the executive's position. Gray says he is looking for a test case to assert the line-item veto that some legal scholars consider implicit in the Constitution. It would enable the President to delete individual items in an appropriations bill without vetoing the entire bill.

Gray believes that the Founding Fathers recognized the "aggrandizing instincts of any legislature" and so placed the responsibility for foreign policy with the executive. They wanted, in the words of Alexander Hamilton, "more decision, more dispatch, more secrecy and more responsibility" in foreign policy, qualities likely to be found "where single men" not "bodies" exercised power.[2] Such aggrandizement in the modern day, says Gray, "gives congressmen a platform to play the D.C. game. They get visibility and collect money. The more power they assert, the more media coverage they get. A challenger can't match that, and we get very high incumbency rates." One example: Rep. Solarz, chairman of the subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, listed with the Federal Elections Commission PAC contributions to his 1988 re-election campaign from such groups as: Taiwanese Americans for Solarz; the American Association of Indian Physicians Educational and Political Contributions Committee; the India Association Political Committee for Better Government; and the Philip-

[1]For elaboration on this point, see L. Gordon Crovitz, "How Ronald Reagan Weakened the Presidency," *Commentary*, September 1988.

[2]Discussions of constitutional theory can be found in *The Fettered Presidency*, published in 1989 by the American Enterprise Institute, edited by Crovitz and Jeremy A. Rabkin.

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pine Physicians in America PAC.

In moving from defense to offense, Gray's group ought to consider getting Bush to back several reform proposals:

- Republicans led by Rep. Hyde have introduced proposals to reduce the size of the intelligence committees and the Democrats' disproportionate advantage in membership and to require that all committee members undergo security checks and swear oaths not to reveal secrets.
- The bipartisan foreign aid panel's suggestions on scaling down earmarking and excising contradictory mandates in the foreign aid authorization should be pursued. Also, funds might be appropriated on a "no-year" basis rather than requiring they be spent by the end of each fiscal year.
- The congressional staff has grown from 8,428 in 1965 to more than 20,000 today. Subcommittees have also proliferated. The President ought to scrutinize the multibillion dollar legislative branch appropriations bill, which finances the subcommittee staffs who work to intrude on his authority.
- Another place to cut the congressional budget is in travel. Taxpayer money goes to fund the "personal diplomacy" that undermines the U.S. position around the world. Public Citizen, a Washington Nader outfit, has documented $13.5 million in expenses for 386 members to take 1,053 trips during the 100th Congress.
- The Justice Department should consider prosecuting congressmen under the Logan Act, which prohibits unauthorized negotiations with foreign powers. Also, the administration should investigate whether members are divulging classified information in conducting their own foreign policies, as some said Speaker Wright did in connection with Nicaragua. This would be at the least a violation of congressional rules.
- Have private U.S. lobbies violated the Foreign Agents Registration Act or other federal laws in flakking for foreign governments and movements?[3] At a minimum, members of Congress like Rep. Bonior, who serves as chairman of the pro-Sandinista, pro-FMLN lobby Pax Americas, ought to decide which job they want to keep.
- In the coming debate on congressional campaign finance, perhaps limits on donations from PACs that front for the interests of foreign governments should be considered.
- The administration ought to propose legislation that would make the Moynihan amendment apply to Congress too, by outlawing the blackmailing of foreign governments by congressional appropriators who condition foreign aid on quid pro quos.

Such reforms admittedly do not stand a good chance of enactment, since Congress has no incentive to vote itself out of its current foreign-policy role. The situation stands even less chance of being corrected if Republicans themselves are unclear about what constitutes abuse of congressional power, a problem that has grown enormously since the end of the Vietnam war and the Watergate scandal, when bipartisanship in foreign policy fizzled, distrust of presidential power peaked, and an issues-oriented left supplanted the Southern conservative and Northern ethnic wings of the Democratic party. The current struggle is more than the age-old institutional struggle among contending branches of government; given the gerrymandered Democratic dominance of Congress and the inability of the Democrats to capture the presidency, the executive-legislative competition is a partisan left-right political struggle. What is needed more than any reform package is an energetic conservative movement willing to fight that battle.

Conservative critics of a strong executive such as Rep. Mickey Edwards (R-Ok.)[4] fail to give sufficient attention to this political dimension, arguing that in foreign policy a strong President can be dangerous and a strong Congress can be salutary. In doing so, these conservatives confer a kind of moral equivalence to all sorts of congressional action, ignoring the crucial distinction between congressional initiative that follows from and enhances executive policy and that which seeks to undermine it by dishonest and bullying, if not illegal, means. Despite empire-building tendencies that lend incoherence to policy-making, the activities of Democratic activists like Rep. Solarz in pushing for more money for the Afghan resistance or a more engaged U.S. policy in the Philippines are not akin to the sleazy Dodd-Obey *modus operandi*.

Should conservatives fear what Edwards calls a "king-like" presidency headed by a Democrat? Again, a crucial distinction must be made. In such a case, the Republicans' congressional strategy should be to defeat the President's policies openly and on their lack of merit, accepting responsibility for the outcome if they win, and accepting defeat with equanimity if they lose. This quite proper congressional role should not be confused with the pernicious rebellion of today's congressional left, abetted by extremist anti-American lobbies, against our constitutional democracy. ☐

[3]This point is argued more fully in my article, "Democrat Foreign Policy Scandals," *TAS*, August 1987.

[4]See Edwards's article "Line-Item Monarchism," *Policy Review*, Spring 1989.

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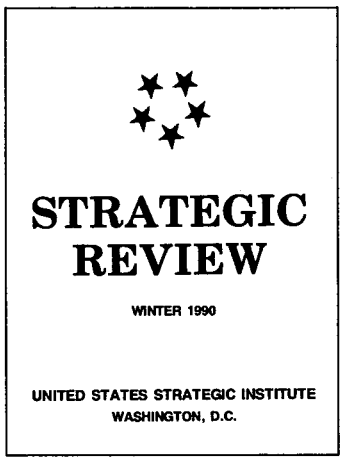

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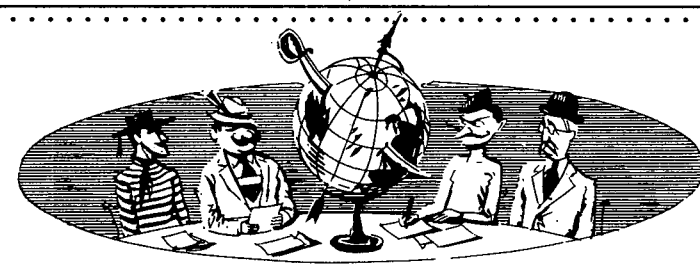


DISMANTLING SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY

by Piotr Brozyna and Mark Lilla

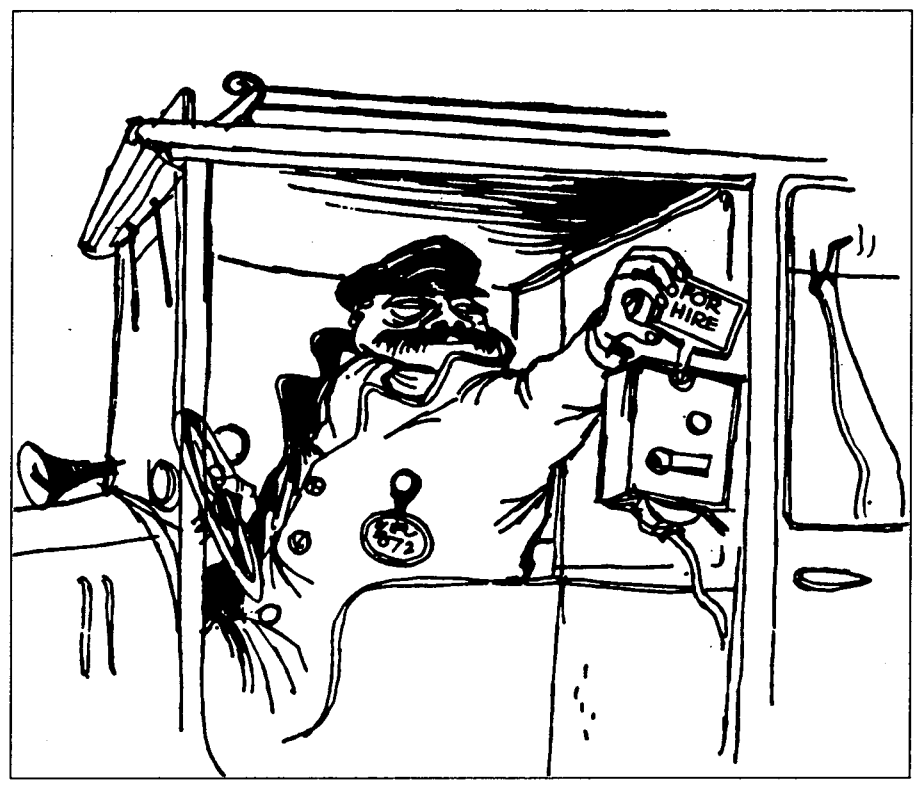
The well-known Polish quip has it that "Communism is the longest road from capitalism to capitalism." If so, Poland is finally entering the homestretch on its long and circuitous journey back to a market economy. It has been a difficult voyage, and it will not be getting any easier. Building "socialism" turned out to be simple; appropriate property, centralize it in the hands of inefficient bureaucracies, distribute rewards to the nomenklatura, suppress initiative and dissent, subsidize the Soviet Union with underpriced raw materials, and, *voila*, Polish "socialism." Building Polish capitalism won't be quite so easy, though, if only because Polish "socialism" must first be dismantled. Monopolies must be abolished and competitors given time to establish themselves; technologically backward factories must be retooled or (more likely) sold for scrap; workers must move in search of work; and the comfortable, unchanging work habits of a controlled economy must be unlearned. We know from experience that developed countries ravaged by war can be rebuilt. We even have examples, if only a few, of less-developed nations learning to nurture market economies. But we have yet to see what might be called "formerly developed" countries put back on the road to capitalism. After Hungary—always a special case—Poland may be the first.

Can the Poles succeed? No one, anywhere, knows. The new government is only months old, and the political-economic environment, both domestic and foreign, continues to change daily. (As we write, the Berlin Wall has been opened and the call for reunification has begun, further complicating the Polish situation.) Last June's elections were only half free, and the delicately balanced "cohabitation" with the Communists is still somewhat precarious. The results of upcoming local elections and the constitutional convention must first be known before Poland's political institutions will be stable enough to allow a complete picture of the economic situation to emerge. For now, the important factors—short-term foreign aid, strikes, winter weather—rest in the hands of chance.

Nonetheless, if the Poles do succeed in overcoming their immediate economic crisis, it will then be time for interested Western observers—and investors in particular—to understand more about the context within which the "capitalization" of the Polish economy will be taking place. Although Western reporting on Poland has generally been quite good on a daily basis, it is our sense that both the intellectual and institutional backgrounds of the current economic reforms are insufficiently understood abroad. To put the matter bluntly: too much attention has been focused on an exaggerated ideological indifference to capitalism, not enough on the quite real structural barriers that could threaten an otherwise free market. The theoretical economic debate is, in our view, almost over; the institutional one is just beginning.

We have tried to describe this background to the Polish economic situation in two articles. Here in the first we thought it important to give readers a historical introduction to the current economic debates, a review of the main intellectual currents that have developed since the war and those that seem most important today. To complement this intellectual roadmap we hope to offer an institutional one in the article to follow. This will describe the institutional challenges offered by the dismantling of "state socialism," political and legal barriers we frankly consider the most important (and interesting) on the road back to capitalism.

Postwar Polish economic thought had its roots in the Second World War itself. In 1945 Poles found themselves not only under the Yalta-sanctioned military occupation of the Soviet Red Army, but also with little of the productive capacity their country boasted before 1939. It has been estimated that 65 percent of Polish factories had been completely or partially destroyed during the war, as had 20 to 40 percent of the housing stock. In total, more than a third of Poland's economic infrastructure had disappeared. This figure does not include the machines and businesses transported to the Soviet Union as captured "German" war loot, whose value Molotov once estimated at $500 million (in 1945 dollars).



Matching the material devastation of the country was the disappearance of the business class and its intellectual spokesmen. The Polish government formed in 1945 announced its willingness to return private businesses to their prewar owners, but hardly any such owners were in a position to demand that that promise be fulfilled. A great number of these businessmen were dead, others were in Communist prisons or had fled the country, while few of those remaining were able to take up legal action. The result was that the Polish government found itself the inheritor of a large part of the country's economy, which had already been essentially nationalized by the Germans. Capitalism had ceased to exist in any recognizable form in 1939, and by 1945 Poland was also without capitalists and their ideas.

Consequently, the Polish postwar economic debate took place among parties all hostile to capitalism in principle, whether those principles were Communist, socialist, or agrarian. The struggle over the Economic Plan during 1948 gives a good example of the alternatives then being considered. For the Communist party, obviously, this plan offered itself as the first major opportunity to revolutionize the economy with "futuristic" social planning and to centralize it permanently within the organs of the state. But the plan itself had been drawn up by the Central Planning Office, which was under the influence of respected socialist economists such as Oskar Lange, Czeslaw Bobrowski, and Edward Lipinski. Hardly proposing a free market, these economists had merely proposed a more realistic plan that focused on providing needed consumer goods rather than investing in heavy Soviet-style industry. Nonetheless, Communist op-

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ponents criticized the plan ferociously, and within a short time managed to change the directorship of the Planning Office, then to reorganize it along strict Soviet lines.

From that point on, the public Polish economic discussion (if it can be called that) was kept almost exclusively within the terms set by the Soviet example, and the only respectable intellectual alternative seemed to be a rather ill-defined social-democratic one. This social-democratic tradition enjoyed moments of renewal, as during the 1956-57 economic reforms, and was later supported by Solidarity economists such as Waldemar Kuczynski and Ryszard Bugaj. But, by and large, the Communists managed to suppress even this mild dissent. Many "reactionary" professors lost their academic posts during the following decades, and in 1952 the entire School of Law, Social Science, and Economics at the University of Lublin was closed down for propagating economic heresies. Throughout this period the Catholic Church and its publications offered the only other intellectual alternative, which might be called Christian-democratic. Writers grouped around the Catholic Krakow weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* developed their own economic doctrine, for example, which was equally critical of collectivism and "egoistic" capitalism. Almost entirely absent from the debate were defenders of free-market liberalism. There were a few—Stefan Kisielewski and Leopold Tyrmand at *Tygodnik Powszechny*, and economist Adam Krzyzanowski—but their voices were drowned out by the unlikely anti-capitalist coalition of Communists, social democrats, and Catholics.

This constellation of economic ideas remained stable in Poland until roughly 1980—that is, until the rise of Solidarity as a political and intellectual force. It comes as no surprise that, given its union base, Solidarity picked up what remained of the social-democratic tradition and supported economists like Kuczynski and Bugaj. But the economic failures of the 1970s and greater awareness of the sources of Western growth also convinced other opposition figures, such as Edward Lipinski of KOR (the Workers' Defense Committee), that "our economists were badly taught" and that what Poland really needed was not better bureaucratic economists but rather private "managers." These two streams of thought—the social-democratic school and the "manager" school, let's call them—still exist within the Solidarity movement.

The difference between these two schools first became apparent at the Solidarity convention of September and October 1981. In fact, three different proposals for economic reform came out of that meeting. The first two were social-democratic in inspiration, while the third had a distinctly free-market flavor. Its primary author, Lublin economist Stefan Kurowski, focused especially on the role of farmers in the Polish economy, and proposed that the state sell one million hectares of cultivated land to private farmers and that the production of goods in agricultural support industries (machinery, fertilizers) be relocated to rural areas. Kurowski also proposed that greater freedom be given for opening private businesses in light industry, services, and construction, and he envisaged a private work force of at least one million. Although the authors of this program were careful never to use the words "privatization" or "free-market," their aims were clear, especially to the Communist party, which immediately criticized their "liberalism."

The declaration of martial law in 1981 rendered these proposals irrelevant, if only temporarily. Today, of course, the two schools of economic thought within Solidarity—the social-democratic and the "manager" schools—represent only the two most distinct colors on a spectrum that now includes many other positions, both within the government and within parliament. We can align their major spokesmen roughly from left to right. Furthest on the left we still find the social-democratic economist Ryszard Bugaj, who, in a recent article in the Warsaw review *Krytyka* (Spring 1989), outlines his unchanged four-part creed: "pluralism in the forms of property; the market; self-management; democracy in political life."

But Bugaj apart, the main body of economic opinion moved decidedly away from the social-democratic ideal, which came to be considered increasingly unrealistic in the Polish context. Waldemar Kuczynski, today director of Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki's council of advisers, has been an important figure in this movement toward economic realism. In 1988 he wrote an important article in the émigré magazine *Kultura* marking the death of collectivization and centralized economic planning as respectable ideas. But he also noted that, after forty years of Communist indoctrination, Poles were instinctively distrustful of capitalism, a prejudice only encouraged by radical free-market theorists defending uncontrolled competition and selfishness in distinctly un-Catholic terms. He concluded that, in the short term, the Poles should not concern themselves with making abstract choices between Friedman and Keynes, the U.S. and Sweden—premature alternatives, to say the least. They would first have to learn how to make the transition from "an almost medieval economy, centralized and state-directed, to a private market economy." Joining Kuczynski in the plea for realism has been economist Leszek Balcerowicz, a Communist before 1980 who is now minister of finance and vice president of Mazowiecki's cabinet. Balcerowicz has long argued that the Poles' distrust of capitalism and desire for economic equality has been exaggerated, and that a market economy is possible in Poland. However, rather than hold up the U.S. as an example, he has instead encouraged Poles to study Taiwan and South Korea as models of short-term economic development. →

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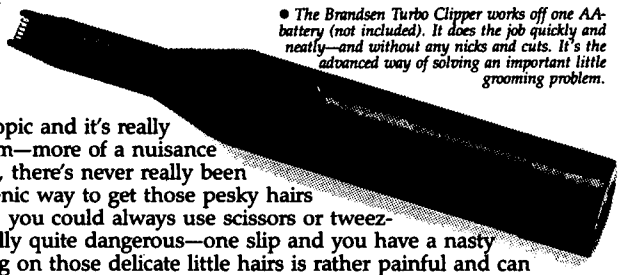

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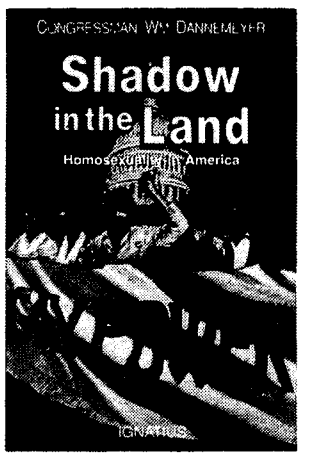

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Further to the right, at least in economic theory, is the school of free-market partisans that grew up over the past five years around the late Miroslaw Dzielski, the founder and leading spirit behind the Krakow Industrial Society. Dzielski was a professor of philosophy who served as an early adviser to Solidarity in Krakow, and who discovered Milton Friedman's books in the early 1980s. From that point on he became something of a soul possessed, putting out a hard-hitting magazine and organizing his society to encourage small private businessmen and to defend them against the Communist authorities. (A similar association was later founded in Warsaw by the current minister of construction, Aleksander Paszynski.) Yet although Dzielski's prophetic manner marginalized some of his ideas, in tactical dealings with the Communist state, and especially its Kafkaesque "legal" system, he was astonishingly realistic and effective. This tactical realism was also reflected in the society's moderate reform plan for the Polish economy, which was published in the fall of 1987. It simply called for a currency reform that would allow the zloty to float freely, privatization of state enterprises, tax reform (including a value-added tax), and the reduction of import duties to encourage foreign trade.

Throughout the 1980s, then, one could see a realistic free-market consensus growing among most opposition economists, a consensus made possible by important changes in the Polish political climate. Externally, of course, there had been the "Gorbachev effect": a Soviet-sanctioned crusade for economic reform, along with an opening of public debate on the alternatives ahead. The liberation of Polish economists to speak their minds after decades of imposed silence surprisingly exposed an underground free-market party more enamored of the Reagan and Thatcher "examples" than the Yugoslavian "example" they were officially allowed to praise. But within Poland itself during the 1980s one also noted the rise of a "manager" mentality among a large portion of the educated class, which was forced by the deteriorating economic situation to try opening its own businesses—above or below ground—despite official government roadblocks. Foremost among this class, and very important for its success, are well-placed relatives of the nomenklatura (some of whom were "converted" to capitalism by Miroslaw Dzielski's society). But it also includes journalists, professors and school teachers, and even Solidarity activists, all of whom have become crucial supporters of economic realism in the present Polish situation.

It is this rise of a moderate, realistic economic liberalism within the opposition itself that explains the general character of the economic program announced by the new government last October. There now is a base of free-market consensus that can be counted on in Poland. But the formation of the Mazowiecki government last summer left in doubt whether this intellectual consensus could be translated into radical economic reforms in the political arena. In fact it was, though the credit here must be given to an American, the Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs.

Sachs arrived in Warsaw not long after the elections at the invitation of the government, and at the expense (it is reported) of Hungarian-American financier George Soros. Sachs proposed a "shock treatment" for the Polish economy that included the immediate decontrol of prices, of foreign trade, and of foreign-currency exchange. From this base Sachs predicted a number of effects, both long term and short term. In the short term, for instance, he predicted that a radical liberalization of prices would increase coal revenues, which could in turn be used to ease the budget deficit. He also suggested raising wages and public investment with the funds currently used to support consumer prices. Import tariffs, he continued, should be fixed at a flat 20 percent, and all unnecessary barriers to opening small private businesses should be immediately taken down. Finally, he proposed a complete reform of the tax system, beginning with a new income tax fixed at a low level for all workers, and a value-added tax for businesses.

There were immediate, and predictable, critics of the Sachs plan, beginning with some social-democrats worried about the Polish welfare state, and including specialists within the state bureaucracies who felt that Sachs lacked an understanding of their particular institutions. But these critics were in turn swamped by what the Poles themselves now call "the Sachs effect": somehow this American economist had applied a psychological "shock" to the Polish public, giving them hope by painting a glowing picture of their future economy. The Poles in general are very prudent about the possibility of change, and have developed an understandable sense of tragedy that has served them well during their peaceful revolution. But now may be the time to offer the Polish people hope as well, and Sachs did just that. As an editorial in the Solidarity daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* put it, "If the people believe that Sachs is right, he may turn out to be right. For the fact is that the Polish people will need a vision of success and a conviction that their society is capable of enjoying success."

The government's final economic reform package announced by Finance Minister Balcerowicz on October 11 borrowed much from Sachs's original proposals, and profited enormously from the hopeful atmosphere they had created. The three central principles of the package were unmistakably Sachsian: a reform of property relations to encourage private ownership; the decontrol of supply and demand within the market; and the reform of the banking and financial system in order to open the Polish economy to foreign investment. The only real difference between the Sachs proposals and the final official program was that the government retained a much stronger role for the public administration in regulating this transition to a privatized economy. And even this role should not be exaggerated: the state planning office, for instance, will only provide statistical information in the future, rather than setting economic targets. Otherwise, the program was a moderate "shock" plan.

Despite the presence of the "Sachs effect" among the intellectual class and the public at large, the government's program still ran into criticism from the older schools of economic thought within Poland and the parliament. The social-democratic economist Ryszard Bugaj, for example, developed his own reform program that included strict wage-price controls, limited privatization, and continued controls of foreign exchange: this package was rejected by the Mazowiecki government. The more traditional trade-unionist faction of Solidarity also objected that it could not accept high levels of unemployment or a rapid reduction of real wages. And the agrarian-Catholic wing of parliament also complained that family and agricultural problems had been ignored in the reforms. The most peculiar response came from the Communist party, though, which was divided between taking credit for its own earlier liberalizations, and criticizing the new reforms in populist terms of "social justice."

But in general it can be said that liberal free-market ideas—as ideas—now command the respect and even enthusiasm of the most important figures within the Polish government, the press, and the economic profession. How those ideas will be put into practice will depend, quite obviously, on the sorts of political compromises that must be made within parliament, the institutional limits of the bureaucracy, the future development of Solidarity as a union or a party, and the general economic climate. Yet however substantial these compromises end up being, it is a striking fact that in Poland today no other school of thought really competes with free-market liberalism at the level of economics. There are divergent views about how large a welfare state Poland can afford, and what character it should have to protect families, the elderly, and the unemployed. There are also plenty of special interests—farmers, workers in heavy industry, bureaucrats—ready to defend their traditional privileges or demand new ones. Such debates are quite normal and natural within all democratic capitalist nations, and the Poles will now learn to enjoy them—or to suffer them, as the case may be. No one can predict who will win those debates, and it is perfectly possible (though in our view unlikely) that Poland will end up with a highly regulated economy burdened with disproportionate social spending. What can be predicted is that such an economy would not be built on a rival theory of economics. In *theory*, all Poles are capitalists now.

Whether they remain convinced of the superiority of capitalism will depend perhaps less on the new government's success in permitting free-market activity than on its success in dismantling socialism. For between the present situation and the radiant future painted by Jeffrey Sachs lie enormous barriers: the rusting, lethargic institutions of state economic control and the habits inculcated by them; a cynically politicized legal system; and an absence of independent local and regional government. These institutional barriers will not disappear overnight, no matter how big the economic "shock" is. In the coming years the Poles must face each of them, creating a "constitutional" framework (in the broadest sense of that term) for free economic activity. Despite the success of capitalism as an economic theory, it has no political theory for dismantling a completely socialized economy and constructing such a framework. What such a project will entail in contemporary Poland is the subject of our follow-up article. □

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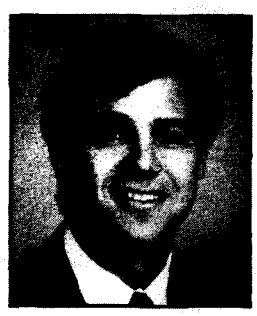
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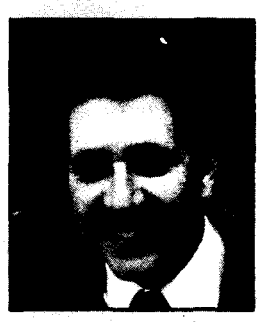
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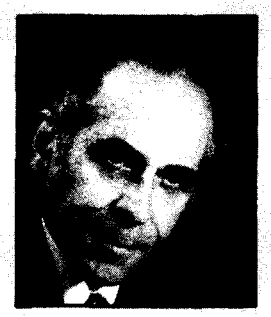
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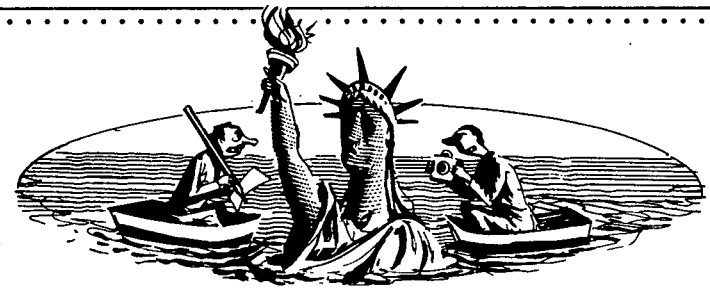


PRESS SECRETARY BUSH

by Terry Eastland

At nine o'clock one Friday morning in October, President Bush wanted to hold a press conference. His top aides didn't, mainly because they feared questions on abortion, a throbbing issue on Capitol Hill and in the Virginia and New Jersey gubernatorial campaigns. Guess who won. Within the hour Bush met the White House press corps, fielding queries on a variety of subjects, including abortion.

On November 28, Bush and his aides debated how they might deflate rising expectations for the Malta summit. Bush settled the matter by taking on the job himself. Reporters summoned to the Oval Office watched the President of the United States criticize a wire service report suggesting that Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev would attend a summit only if he could do some serious business—like sign an arms control agreement. "There isn't going to be such a deal," Bush told the reporters.

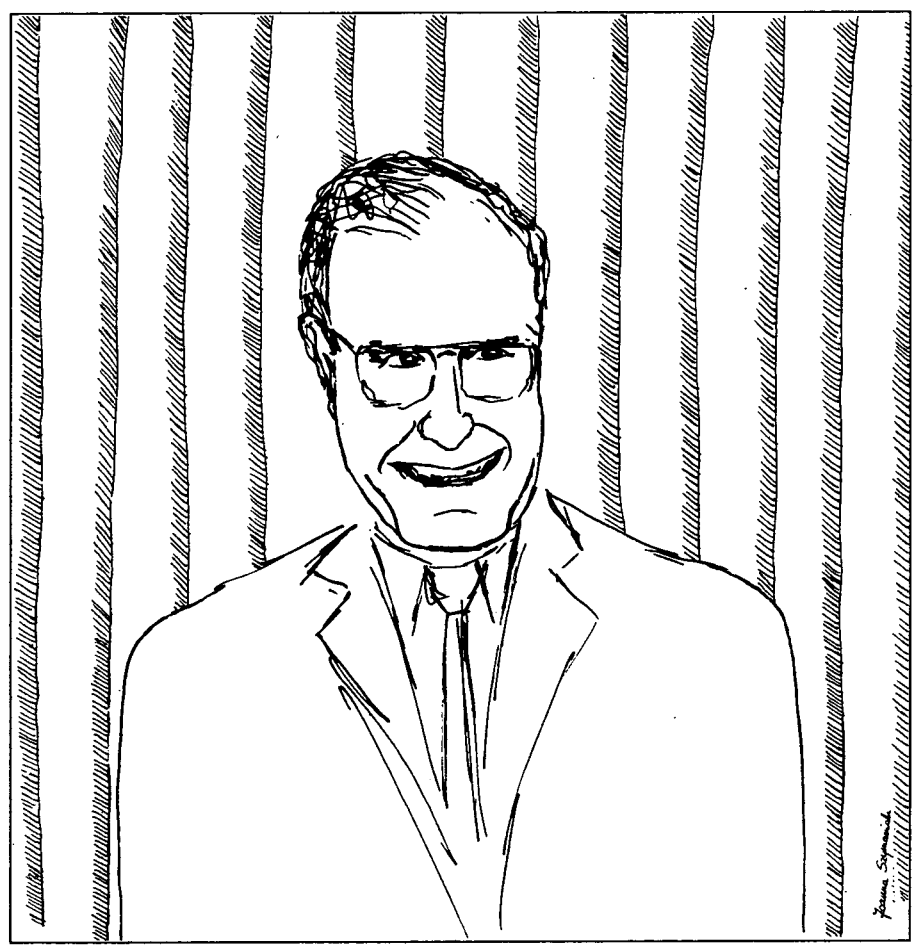
The episodes tell a story. After a year in office, President Bush has also turned out to be Press Secretary Bush. This is not to say that the officially titled press secretary, Marlin Fitzwater, is out of a job. To the contrary, Fitzwater is more important to Bush than he ever was to President Reagan, whom he also served. Fitzwater doesn't just brief reporters daily, as he did for Reagan. He also advises Bush at a level of detail that would have been of no interest and no use to Reagan. In fact, it was Fitzwater's advice that helped make Bush what he is today. During the transition Fitzwater drafted a press strategy for Bush that urged him to employ his personal ability to make people—in this case, reporters—feel comfortable and to meet with the press in a variety of ways, and often. Bush agreed.

Five weeks shy of his first year in office, Bush had given thirty-one formal press conferences, dwarfing the Reagan average of six a year. Also by mid-December, Bush had given fourteen informal press conferences—such as those on Air Force One. That's a total of forty-five press conferences of one kind or another. It's probably a presidential record; certainly it's world class.

A President has various ways he can choose to communicate to the huge audience beyond the Oval Office. Bush has chosen to communicate through the media that cover him, and the presidential press conference is his main way of doing it. He usually does not have a general theme, and far be it from him to launch bold initiatives. The press conference is a time when Bush can be Bush. He is relaxed. He rambles. He is good-natured.

There is another fact about his press conferences: they are seldom televised. In fact, most are conducted during daytime. This is purposeful. Bush just does not like television; his press conferences, and his media relations in general, are not determined, at least not primarily, by the imperatives of the camera. Stephen Hess of Brookings has described Bush to me as "a print President." That fits. As Hess says, Bush has "more regard for the written word than for the visual impression."

While the press conference is the centerpiece of his communications effort, Bush does plenty of other things to strengthen his relations with the reporters who cover him. The low-key interview is one. Last spring, for example, Bush invited Jack Nelson of the *Los Angeles Times*, Paul Duke of PBS, R. W. Apple of the *New York Times*, and columnist Georgie Anne Geyer to the White House for barbecue sandwiches and iced tea. "We learned quite a bit about him," says Nelson, "and got a couple of good stories." Bush also will seek out reporters to offer some on-the-spot remarks. He'll jog with those who jog and invite reporters to watch movies. And journalists are among the many Americans who receive his hand-written notes.



Like any good press secretary, Bush is accessible, to say the least. In fact, Bush is the most accessible President since LBJ, who took to calling reporters in for lengthy sessions on Saturday mornings. The weekend labor proved too much; wearied news organizations had to beg Johnson to stop. Bush and the media who cover him have not reached this point, although it has been suggested that they have. Several months into the Bush presidency, Herblock, the political cartoonist, drew a cartoon featuring a sleeping and presumably exhausted journalist (it was Lesley Stahl of CBS) whose rest is interrupted by President Bush, ready to answer still more questions. As 1990 dawned, however, reporters and editors had not asked Bush to withdraw from their midst.

Press work suits Bush just as, well, speeches do not. "I asked him to read a speech aloud once, for a change," recalls one former aide, about an attempt to get the President to work on his delivery. "Just doing that improved it 100 percent. Of course, we're starting from a pretty low baseline." Actually, Bush isn't that bad a speaker; he did okay on Panama, actually inserting into that short speech its most memorable if unpoetic line—"That was enough." But Bush much prefers the one-on-one, give-and-take of the press conference. Still, Bush cannot avoid public speaking; he is President, after all, and with the job goes the podium. He has five speechwriters, and he makes lots of speeches. But, as one might expect, few of his speeches are productions the way Reagan's were. And during his first year only two were delivered to the nation on prime-time television. The second was a Thanksgiving speech, on the eve of the holiday. The first was on September 5, to announce his drug policy. That experience wasn't a good one for the President. Remember that bag of

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Terry Eastland is resident scholar at the National Legal Center for the Public Interest in Washington, D.C. He is writing a book about the lessons for conservative government to be drawn from the Reagan and Bush years.

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crack he held up during the speech? Bush pointed to the crack and said it was seized in a park across the street from the White House. His point was that the drug trade is so prevalent that it occurs even in his neighborhood. It turned out that the Drug Enforcement Administration had to lure a guy to Lafayette Square to do his business in order to produce the necessary speech lines. Bush was furious when he learned what had happened.

Bush seldom employs speechmaking as an instrument of political strategy or as a means of expressing the collective sentiments of the nation. Reagan often did. During his first year in office, for example, Reagan spoke to the American people on important occasions in order to rally support for his budget and tax initiatives. And Reagan became famous for his ability to capture a particular moment with just the right words, as he did in his speech after the *Challenger* tragedy. "The emotional part is hard for me to describe because I'm not an articulate emotionalist," Bush told reporters at Malta. The last time Bush was an articulate emotionalist, the last time he approached what came easy for Reagan, was when he gave his "thousand-points-of-light" acceptance speech at the 1988 Republican Convention.

Bush is no Reagan, but give Bush his due: Reagan was no Bush, either. It boggles the mind to imagine Reagan as the press secretary, just as it boggles the mind to imagine Bush as the Great Communicator. Bush knows who he is and what he does best. During the press conference in Malta, he was asked how he was going to report to the American people on the summit, and whether he would do so in "an Oval Office speech." Bush responded, "Well, I just did one [the Thanksgiving eve address] just before going"—as though he often gave such speeches—"and I don't want to abuse the hospitality of the airwaves." Bush added: "I think we can get the message out by responding to questions." As he spoke, a reporter said: "Press conference is good." Just what Bush was trying to say.

There is no question that Bush is an excellent press secretary. The transcripts show why. Not only is there good humor, and not only is there self-deprecation on Bush's part. ("I will not do anything imprudent," he told a group of editorial writers in December. "Nobody has ever accused me of being too daring.") He also is knowledgeable about most everything and generally gives good answers. He doesn't declare a question out of bounds. Plus, he admits when he does not *know* the answer. And he holds his tongue when he should, as when, just two days before ordering troops to Panama, he was asked what his options were regarding Manuel Noriega. "[A]ll Presidents have options," said Bush. "But they don't discuss what they might be." Bush has made only one mistake I can remember—when he said the Americans trapped in El Salvador had been liberated. Fitzwater quickly corrected that.

Bush likes dealing with the press. It is part of the nuts-and-bolts of politics, and Bush is a nuts-and-bolts kind of guy. "Bush loves the techniques of politics," says one source close to him. "If you really want to get his attention, mention a polling result to him or some development in the grass roots." Or some wire copy. The reporters Bush summoned to his office to hear his preview of the Malta summit heard him quibble about how the lead of a particular story was "a little off, by the way." By the way!

Bush's intense dislike of leaks may seem out of character in a President who likes dealing with the media. It's not. Bush's idea of public service—even of private employment—entails loyalty to a superior of a kind that forbids talking to the media without authorization. But an additional and perhaps primary reason for Bush's dislike of leaks is that they can eliminate his public relations advantage as President. Take the Malta summit. The day before the official announcement of the summit the news was leaked to the *Washington Post*. Bush had wanted to announce it himself and was upset that he did not get to. Bush undoubtedly was thrilled that the secret mission to China stayed under wraps as long as it did.

Like any good press secretary, Bush speaks at all levels of attribution—on the record, off the record, on background, you name it. So do his aides. He and they are good at getting out what they want to get out—unless some leak erupts. And Bush does not make the cardinal error politicians often make—of viewing reporters as some undifferentiated mass. He not only knows the names of most who cover him, but also the names of their spouses and children, and even other details. He works at these relations, which are critical to his success as press secretary. One reporter got a note acknowledging she had won a bet between the two (Bush sent along what he owed, five bucks, which I hope did not violate some ethics provision). When Bush heard NBC's Tom Pettit was getting married, he invited Pettit and his fiancée, and a group of their friends, to the residence to lift a toast. Bush knows that reporters are human beings, too.

As for how reporters view Bush, the answer—not surprisingly—is that they rather like him. One reason is his accessibility. Another is the contrast with Reagan. "There's not the posturing going on," says Nelson of the *Los Angeles Times*. "It's not contrived." What you see with Bush, you tend to get. He doesn't worry that much about his image; neither does Barbara Bush. Does the media's like for Bush affect their reporting? Hard to say. Bush's authenticity and personal touch forces reporters "to give him the benefit of the doubt," according to one who covers Bush. The main negative for Bush, brought to light by the Center for Media and Public Affairs, is that he has received significantly less television coverage than Reagan did during his first year in office, and since August the coverage has been increasingly critical. The fact of less television coverage probably reflects Bush's refusal to load up his schedule with "made-for-TV" events. The increasing criticism of Bush may reflect the natural presidential cycle. Honeymoons don't last forever.

Why, you may ask, this column's in-depth reporting on the nation's Numero Uno Press Secretary? Because of the light it sheds on this presidency. Bush could not be more different from Reagan if he tried. And I'll bet he's trying. The difference manifests itself in White House organization. Fitzwater is more important in this White House, the speechwriters much less. And there is no Mike Deaver. Okay, there is Sig Rogich, the Las Vegas public relations man who did the Boston Harbor ads in the 1988 campaign. But Rogich is no Deaver, precisely because Bush is no Reagan. Rogich is part of no troika (Sununu is a unitary chief of staff). And, anyway, Bush's needs are different from Reagan's. Rogich's big achievement to date is not some Deaveresque media event, complete with just the right camera shots (Deaver once said he felt like Cecil B. De Mille, "always looking through the camera lens"), but something called "Any Saturday." On any given Saturday—maybe ten times a year—a radio network will air an interview with Bush. Why a radio interview? Because it fits Bush precisely. It's another sort of press conference.

The difference between Reagan and Bush also involves something else. Reagan saw himself as a force in the world; he came to office to do something, and he used speeches and television strategically. Bush does not see himself as any particular kind of force. He came to office to serve, which for him means to consolidate Reagan's achievements. His press-secretarial approach fits this self-understanding. It is an inside-the-Beltway approach, just as Reagan's went outside.

The question is whether Bush can continue his approach over four years without being ground into political irrelevance. Clearly, he is in no danger of that right now. Bush's approval ratings have remained very high—higher than those of most Presidents (including Reagan) during their first year. Pre-Panama they were high less because of Bush's achievements than because of the state of the economy and the global demise of Communism. Where the ratings will go post-Panama remains to be seen. The key factor concerns the intensity of support for Bush, which before Panama was consistently lower than it was for Reagan. Bush's communications effort, with its focus on the White House press corps, does not promise to forge the kind of bond with those beyond the Beltway that is necessary for major domestic success.

At some point Bush may find that he has to acquire the aggressive mentality of the rhetorical presidency, which means making use of the bully pulpit for strategic political ends. That, in turn, implies more of a substantive agenda than he has so far been willing to offer (or disclose to) the nation, as well as a willingness to draw lines and make political opponents. Will this happen? Don't count on it. "Well, good morning," Bush began one of his many press conferences recently. "And I'm back again," he added, as reporters broke into warm laughter. Expect Bush to be back again and again and again. As that reporter said, "Press conference is good." □

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WE NEVER CALLED IT "THE BIG EASY"

by Victor Gold

There is a New Orleans accent . . . associated with downtown New Orleans, particularly with the German and Irish Third Ward, that is hard to distinguish from the accent of Hoboken, Jersey City, and Astoria, Long Island, where the Al Smith inflection, extinct in Manhattan, has taken refuge. The reason, as you might expect, is that the same stocks that brought the accent to Manhattan imposed it on New Orleans.

—The tourist A. J. Liebling, quoted by John Kennedy Toole in *A Confederacy of Dunces*

So you're visiting New Orleans for the first time. A brief travel advisory is in order, and what better place to begin than the legend of John Kennedy Toole? Nobody knew the town better than Toole, who died by his own hand in 1969, at age thirty-two. At the time of his death he was an unpublished author, a frustrated genius endowed with perfect pitch for the sound and sight of a culture foreign to New York editors.

It wasn't so much that Toole was a misunderstood writer, only that he chose to write about a misunderstood subject. New York editors (along with Hollywood filmmakers) have always held a skewed vision of Toole's (and my) hometown. In the 1960s, when *A Confederacy of Dunces* was making the publishing rounds, they thought of New Orleans in terms of Creole cuisine, Mardi Gras, Dixieland jazz, and Blanche DuBois. Toole's New Orleans cut across that stereotype. Tennessee Williams they bought, but who were *these* characters and *where* did they come from?

"What's your name?" the sergeant asked the old man.

"Claude Robichaux," he answered and put his little cards on the desk before the sergeant.

The sergeant looked over the cards and said, "Patrolman Mancuso here says you resisted arrest and called him a communiss."

"I didn't mean it," the little man said sadly, noticing how fiercely the sergeant was handling the little cards.

"Mancuso says you say all policemen are communiss."

"Oo-wee," the Negro said across the room.

"Will you shut up, Jones?" the sergeant called out.

"Okay," Jones answered.

"I'll get to you next."

"Say, I didn call nobody no cawmniss," Jones said . . .

[from *A Confederacy of Dunces* (1980)]

Surely this wasn't Creole New Orleans, the Land of Dreams perceived by Manhattan publishers. The rejection slips piled up and Toole died convinced he was a failure. A decade later, nudged by the author's persistent mother, no less a sponsor than Walker Percy re-submitted *Confederacy*, calling it "a great rumbling farce of Falstaffian dimensions." Incredibly, not even the endorsement of one of the great Southern writers of our time could get Toole's manuscript published. When the book finally found a home, it was at Louisiana State University Press, where Percy's praise of Toole's "rendering of the particularities of New Orleans, its out-of-the-way neighborhoods, its odd speech" was duly appreciated.

Once published, *A Confederacy of Dunces* won a Pulitzer Prize and became one of the best-selling novels of the 1980s. Yet Toole, despite belated recognition of his comic genius, remains a failure in one regard. The outside world's misperception of his hometown persists, albeit in a different package. What Percy calls "the particularities of New Orleans" are as little known to outsiders today as they were when *Confederacy* was making the New York publishing rounds.

Of all the foreign writers who've covered the city in the past eighty years—roughly speaking, since the great Irish and European migration of the early 1900s—A. J. Liebling alone fairly reflected Toole's, which is to say the real, New Orleans, in *The Earl of Louisiana* (1961).

I said gently that I had come to talk politics, and asked him what he had heard about Governor Long's condition . . .

"I hear he's on da steady improve all da time," the Assessor said. "Fellas wit' him at Hot Springs tell me he's champin' at da bit to go. . . . He's like a hoss dat woik is what he needs . . . a stoiling campaigner . . ."

In the meanwhile, as the Assessor would say, Hollywood's portrayal of the city was largely confined to epics like *The Buccaneer*, a tinseled history of the legendary Jean Lafitte, with Fredric March, of all unlikely swashbucklers, starring in the 1938 version, and Yul Brynner, of all unlikely bayou-dwellers, in the 1958 remake.

Not that there haven't been a few films over the years that showed glimpses of the real New Orleans. Elia Kazan's *Panic in the Streets*, a *cinéma vérité* film of 1950, covered the darker side of the Crescent City's waterfront; while Walter Hill's 1975 mini-classic *Hard Times*, with Charles Bronson and James Coburn, captured the oystershell texture of the town (including its varied speech patterns) in the Depression thirties. Significantly, neither of these films was touted by its studio as a "New Orleans" picture, because they didn't fit into the Hollywood perception of what a "New Orleans" picture should be. *Panic in the Streets*, after all, was about a pneumonic plague scare, not a Mardi Gras orgy; while *Hard Times* was about a bareknuckle fighter down on his luck, not General Beauregard losing the plantation.

Then, in the early 1980s, came the ubiquitous Chef Paul Prudhomme with his blackened redfish and super-hype of bayou culture. Faster than you could say, *Laissez le bon temps rouler*, New Orleans was transmogrified. Back came the movie-makers, this time to discard the old Creole scenario and show the city as a Cajun kingdom, a hotbed of sybaritic excess and bastard-French corruption: *The Big Easy*.

Excess, yes, corruption, certainly, but they still haven't got it right. New Orleans may not be a Creole city of antebellum charm, but neither is it a village of two-stepping Cajuns just in from the Andouille Festival at Evangeline Oak. It has its Robichauxs, Heberts, and Prudhommes, descended from the early French Acadian migrants to south Louisiana, but they are stirred in with the Mancusos, Reillys, Kolbs, Joneses, and Levys, all ingredients in the ethnic jambalaya that makes the town unique; which is to say that all the blackened redfish craze has done, in addition to ruining a lot of

Victor Gold is national correspondent for The American Spectator *and frequently—in April, May, October, or November—returns to his hometown for an oyster poorboy and bottle of Dixie.*

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good seafood, is replace one myth with another.

Too late to write a book about it. Besides, the books have already been written, and the "particularities" of America's Most Interesting City (in this case a Chamber of Commerce come-on that happens to be accurate) are there for any tourist who, like Liebling, cares to look beyond the myth. Here then, for the first-time visitor, are a few travel tips on how to make the most out of your stay in John Kennedy Toole's hometown:

1. Unless you've already been suckered into a super-saver bargain basement air excursion, don't plan your trip for the months of June, July, August, or September. What the Chamber won't tell you is that New Orleans is also America's Most Miserable Mid-Summer Vacation City. For that matter, write off December through March—the chill, dank, drizzly months when, if your object is to get away for the winter, your money will spend better in Florida. The truth of the matter is that there are only four months of the year when a tourist can take in the city at its best—April, May, October, and November. This excludes, the discerning traveler will note, visiting the city during Mardi Gras season, the worst of all possible times to enjoy New Orleans-as-New Orleans and not as a mecca for indiscriminate tourists.

2. By all means, take in Bourbon Street and at least one of the city's *haute cuisine* restaurants (some but not all of which are in the French Quarter). But to find the city beyond the stereotype, think of it as a blue-collar rather than a ruffled-shirt town; a little of Marseilles or Paris-on-the-Mississippi, but more like a Baltimore-with-style. This means leaving the beaten tourist path to take in one of the city's out-of-the-way neighborhood restaurants, where the natives eat not *pompano en papillote* but red or pinto beans-and-rice, and fried oyster poorboys. Sadly, the advent of franchise barbarism has depleted the number of these home-grown eateries in recent years (a Jack-in-the-Box has replaced the venerable Beacon in my old neighborhood), but the native culture survives in places like Jaeger's, at the corner of Elysian Fields and Galvez. Go, live it up, but above all, look and listen. Odds are you'll run into any number of Toole's characters.

3. The quaint carriage ride around the Quarters is fine, but the only true transportation in New Orleans, for cultural research, is via taxicab. Engage your driver in conversation about either the Saints or the latest election/vote fraud investigation going on in Louisiana. (There is *always* either an election or post-election vote fraud investigation going on in Louisiana.) Ask, then listen. Odds are your driver will be one of the Assessor's relatives.

4. Either before or during your visit, acquire and delve into the following reference books to put you into the spirit of things: *Confederacy* and *The Earl*, of course; Harnett Kane's *Louisiana Hayride* (Morrow/Pelican), in particular Chapter XVIII, "Campaign à la Mardi Gras"; John Chase's *Frenchmen, Desire, Good Children (and Other Streets of New Orleans)*, a lively 1960 history of the city, published by Robert L. Crager & Co.; and Mary Lou Widmer's *New Orleans in the Thirties* (Pelican, 1989), a period book that evokes a sense of the city as a community, not a tourist trap.

5. Finally, make a special effort to ingratiate yourself with the locals by learning the native patois. The name of the city is New *Or-luns* or *Or-lyuns*, never New Or-*leens* (except when Louis Armstrong sings it). Call it *Or-luns*, call it *Or-lyuns*, call it, if you're carried away by Chamber of Commerce slogans, *America's Most Interesting City*, or *The City That Care Forgot*. But *don't* call it, for God or John Kennedy Toole's sake, *The Big Easy*. Where that started, I'll never know; but in all my years in the city, I never heard it uttered by a New Orleanian. You ast me, it was probly some communiss thought it up. □

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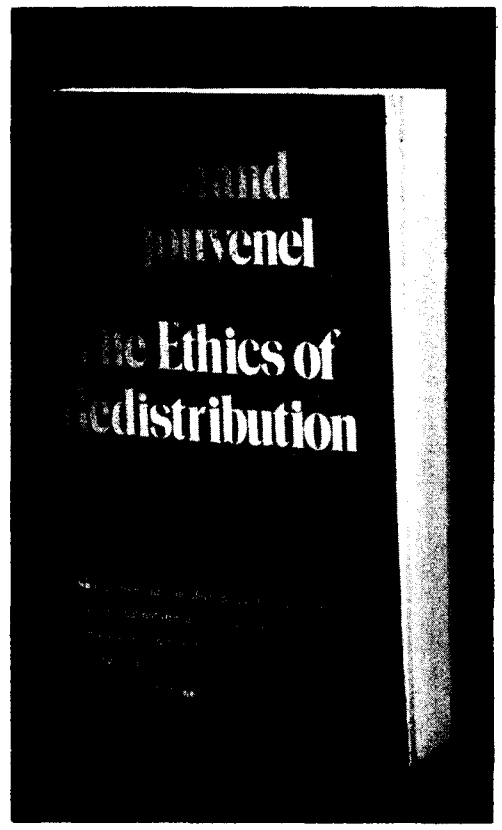

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THE NATION'S PULSE

RACE LIFTS

by Hastings Wyman, Jr.

The late Elijah Muhammad, a founder of the Black Muslims, probably overstated the matter when he said that white people are devils. But neither are they saints, and much of the black political agenda of recent years has required far more selflessness among Caucasians than it is reasonable to presume. Justice (or effectiveness) aside, any black politician who calls on whites to legislate employment preferences for blacks, or to implement major income redistribution programs to benefit blacks, is whistling Dixie.

Nonetheless, the 1989 off-year elections may have signalled a change in the nation's racial politics. The elections of Democrats Douglas Wilder as Virginia's first black governor and, on the West Coast, Norm Rice as Seattle's first black mayor indicate that black politicians are becoming more moderate and white voters less reluctant to vote for blacks. To be sure, this change was not apparent everywhere: David Dinkins's election as New York City's first black mayor, while no less publicized than the other racial "firsts," is a reminder that old-style racial politics is still with us.

The nation's press has duly noted the success of these and other black candidates—in Durham, North Carolina, and New Haven, Connecticut, for instance. Much of the coverage focused on those whites who were motivated by race not to vote for black candidates. But the press all but ignored a major development: white voters who changed their traditional voting patterns to support the black candidates. It is these voters—and the moderate black politicians they supported—who are creating a new racial climate in American politics that is already evident in the early sparring for the 1990 elections.

Perhaps the most noteworthy thing about the Virginia and Seattle elections was that they saw a significant number of moderate and conservative whites cross ideological lines to support a black candidate. In New York City, by contrast, Dinkins's victory rested on the loyalty of liberal Democrats. Not that race was the only factor in these contests. Wilder's pro-choice stand won him votes among some upscale whites, and Wilder clearly had a superior résumé—thirteen years in the legislature, four as lieutenant governor—to the GOP's Marshall Coleman. In Seattle, environmental/development issues were prominent. And Dinkins's ethical problems—such as failing to file an income tax return—were a factor in New York City. Still, Wilder's and Rice's willingness to assume a moderate stance even on racially touchy issues probably explains the positive response they received from GOP-leaning voters.

In the Old Dominion State, about 14 percent of the voters who backed George Bush in 1988 crossed over to vote for the Democrat Wilder. As a result, Wilder ran much better among white voters—winning 40 percent of their vote—than did, for example, Michael Dukakis, who won only 30 percent of Virginia's white vote in 1988.

These voters did not move under their own steam, but in response to Wilder's campaign, in which he transformed himself from a state senator who attacked the beloved state song ("Carry Me Back to Old Virginny"—Uncle Tom lyrics at their most mawkish) to a law-and-order Democrat. He spoke out against the Labor Day violence of black students at Virginia Beach and he supported capital punishment. And on a non-racial theme dear to the hearts of conservative voters, Wilder opposed any new taxes.

Similar trends were on display in Seattle. Although normally a Democratic stronghold (Dukakis carried it in '88), the city isn't necessarily "liberal," as witness the fate of a citywide referendum in November to curb racially motivated busing. While voters were approving the anti-busing measure by the narrowest of margins (50.03 percent to 49.97 percent), they were giving Rice 57 percent of the vote. In other words, at least 12 percent of Rice's vote came from backers of the anti-busing measure. As one local observer put it, opposition to busing doesn't have to be a racially polarizing issue. Indeed, one black Seattle schoolboard member who opposes busing was re-elected with strong support in both black and white precincts. Says a white lawyer who voted for Rice and for the anti-busing measure: "I'm convinced you can be anti-busing and not a racist." A majority of Seattle voters apparently agreed.

Moreover, in Seattle as in Virginia, whites could support the black candidates for other than racial reasons. Rice, like Wilder, offered something to white voters. For starters, he was "clearly the best candidate," says a Seattle educator. "He has been a responsible public servant, takes care of his yard, and has a beautiful wife with a Ph.D." On the Seattle city council, Rice had a reputation as "a healer, a bridge person between Republicans and Democrats" on budgetary and other key issues, says a corporate consultant. Rice's position on the anti-busing referendum was a case in point: he promises to end crosstown transit of students for racial reasons within four years.

Only in New York City, that citadel of liberalism, was white resistance to a black candidate striking, especially because the 30 percent of the white vote that went to Dinkins represented a huge drop-off among Democrats generally. In Queens, which Dukakis carried with 60 percent of the vote in 1988, Dinkins managed only 40 percent a year later. Unlike Wilder's and Rice's campaigns, which found a way to attract whites, Dinkins's campaign turned them off. Though the former machine politician tried to sound a moderate tone, more often than not he came across as hopelessly dull. What's more, he did not make a strong effort to dissociate himself from supporters perceived to be anti-Semitic. As a result, only 40 percent of the normally Democratic Jewish vote went to Dinkins. Finally, there was Jesse Jackson. Although Dinkins kept him at some distance, Wilder kept him out of his state altogether. By election night, Jesse was at Dinkins's side.

Yet even New York was part of a little-noticed trend during last year's elections: white voters are getting accustomed to black participation in politics. Fourteen months ago, Ron Brown, a black Washington, D.C. lawyer, was elected chairman of the Democratic National Committee. At the time, a number of Democratic realists and political analysts (myself included) thought Brown was the wrong man for the job. Indeed, I had the same reaction in 1987 when Ed Cole, also a black, was chosen Democratic state chairman in Mississippi. Even though Cole had once worked for the late Senator James Eastland, I was certain that further identification of the Democratic party with blacks was going to hurt Democrats in Mississippi. Instead, the 1989 elections underscored what had taken place in the state since Cole's selection, where voters elected a Democratic governor and Democrats won two important congressional races. In other words, race is becoming less of a factor in American politics.

Of course, it's too early to say that moderate black politicians and conservative white voters are ready to walk unimpeded into the sunset. Indeed,

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Hastings Wyman, Jr. publishes Southern Political Report.

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since the November elections, Rep. John Conyers, the black Democrat from Michigan, has introduced legislation calling for reparations to blacks for the harm done by slavery. Similarly, Jesse Jackson's efforts on behalf of the Statehood for D.C. movement has seen him compare the district's status to slavery. Neither proposal is likely to bridge the nation's racial gap.

Nevertheless, in the coming years a number of black politicians nationwide will seek higher office in races where the support of white voters will be essential to victory. This year alone, an unprecedented number of black candidates, all Democrats, will be running for statewide office in the South, the home of 50 percent of the nation's black voters and 60 percent of its black officeholders. Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young is running for governor of Georgia, state senator Theodore Mitchell is running for governor of South Carolina, and former Charlotte mayor Harvey Gantt is likely to run for the U.S. Senate in North Carolina. In Mississippi, Rep. Mike Espy is writing a weekly column and broadcasting a weekly television program—both for statewide, not districtwide, distribution.

Although still something of a long shot, Andy Young has a chance to repeat Doug Wilder's feat in 1990. An *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* poll shows Young leading in the Georgia governor's race. In his early speeches, Young has stressed economic growth (as Wilder did in his '85 bid for lieutenant governor). Says an Atlanta journalist: "Young can do more with white people than Dr. Carver could do with a peanut." Indeed, as mayor of the state's largest city—a liability in the rest of the state—Young is respected for his ability to work well with business leaders. But other polls—and most Peach State politicos—are highly skeptical about Young's chances.

Young's failure to appeal to a higher percentage of whites is no doubt due in part to the difficulty he's had in making the transition from former aide to Martin Luther King and Jimmy Carter's U.N. ambassador to good ol' boy. Commenting on the Wilder and Dinkins victories, Young sounded straight off the set of "Hee Haw": "I always felt that white folk in Georgia are way ahead of white folk in New York or Virginia." Yet it seems that Andy still hasn't gotten the hang of pragmatism. My office recently received a form letter over Young's signature asking for contributions to "Voter Education Namibia," a fund that will go to "hinder South Africa's ability to influence" elections in this new African nation. Namibia is not a cause that white folk in Georgia cotton to.

But even if black candidates in 1990 won't relive the experience of black candidates in 1989, they will continue to influence the direction of American politics. Two years ago, a former operative of the Democratic National Committee told me he would trade 20 percent of the black vote to the Republicans to ease his party's burden of being identified as the party of the blacks. The '89 results, and the moderate black campaigns to come, could lessen the Democrats' burden. In the process, the unearned benefit the GOP has enjoyed from white hostility to blacks or to their political agenda is also likely to decrease. □

THE TALKIES

MANHATTAN MELODRAMA, BAYOU BANTER

by Bruce Bawer

Woody Allen's *Crimes and Misdemeanors* begins with a black-tie banquet at which Judah Rosenthal (Martin Landau), a sixtyish, affluent, distinguished-looking New York ophthalmologist, is being saluted for his fundraising efforts on behalf of a new hospital wing. It's not long before you know you're in Woody Allen territory: when a colleague raises a toast, he hails Judah as a man who can tell you the name of "the best hotel in Moscow, the best restaurant in Paris, the best recording of a particular Mozart symphony." This gauche, unintentionally daffy equation of great art and *la dolce vita* is vintage Allen; Judah—the public Judah, anyway—is plainly Allen's idea of what every man would like to be. And the best thing he has going for him, it would seem, is his long and happy marriage to the lovely Miriam (Claire Bloom).

Yet, as it develops, everything's not coming up roses for the Rosenthals. Unbeknownst to Miriam, Judah's been having an affair for over two years with a dumpy middle-aged stewardess named Dolores Paley (Anjelica Huston). This unstable dame is threatening to tattle not only to Miriam but to the hospital authorities (into whose funds, it appears, Judah unwisely dipped a while back when he was having cash-flow problems). Judah's in a quandary: as he explains to his patient Ben (Sam Waterston), a rabbi who's gradually losing his eyesight, Miriam would never forgive him for having an affair. What to do? To his horror, he's tempted to call his lowlife brother Jack (Jerry Orbach)—who knows how to arrange a rub-out and has no qualms about doing so.

Meanwhile, another marriage—between Ben's aloof, cranky sister Wendy (Joanna Gleason) and her filmmaker husband Clifford (Woody Allen)—is also on the ropes. Clifford's a specialist in pious, low-budget documentaries on acid rain and toxic waste, and Wendy can't help comparing his pathetic career highlights (e.g., honorable mention in a Cincinnati documentary film festival) with the glorious achievements of her brother Lester (Alan Alda), a rich sitcom producer with "a closet full of Emmys." In what seems a last-ditch attempt to turn Clifford around, Wendy arranges for him to do a profile of Lester for a public-TV series; yet Clifford's more interested in getting the series' associate producer, Halley Reed (Mia Farrow), with whom he finds himself becoming infatuated, to back his work-in-progress on the elderly philosopher Louis Levy (Martin Bergmann). Thus we have two protagonists, *Doppelgängern* of sorts, each of them a Jewish man lured by the attractions of a gentile woman into a solemn moral predicament. The questions before us: Will Judah order a hit on Dolores? Will Clifford desert Wendy in short order and hit on Halley?

Plainly, love and death remain Allen's major themes. (Indeed, the title *Crimes and Misdemeanors* might be seen as something of a variation on the title *Love and Death*, with the emphasis this time being not on emotional abstraction but on morally meaningful action: the misdemeanor being adultery, the crime murder.) This is not the first time, moreover, that Allen has placed tenuously connected plots alongside each other: *Hannah and Her Sisters* is the most notable previous example. But the stories in that film fit together in a way that the stories of Judah and Clifford don't. Their connection feels entirely theoretical; they may reflect Allen's enchantment with a single set of ideas, but they don't strike one as authentic components of a single vision.

And *ideas* is the operative word here. While waiting to find out what Judah and Clifford will do, we listen in on lots of Philosophy 101 chitchat. Judah, we learn, finds the world "harsh and empty of values and pitiless"; Ben counters that it manifests a "moral structure and higher power." Clifford and Halley exchange similarly weighty remarks. This sort of stilted, ponderous give-and-take has made for awkward moments in Allen's movies ever since *Annie Hall*, but he usually gets through them fast enough to avoid major damage. *Interiors* and *September* were exceptions; so, alas, is *Crimes and Misdemeanors*. Contributing to the devastation is Allen's most fully orchestrated attempt yet at symbolism, wherein everybody in the picture makes constant references to eyes, blindness, vision, and the like, all of which are meant to allude to a frequently quoted remark by Judah's late father, a rabbi (seen in flashback), to the effect that "the eyes of God are on us always." This pattern of symbolic references is grotesquely overdone and thoroughly mechanical, a textbook example of symbolism-by-the-textbook.

Bruce Bawer is The American Spectator*'s movie reviewer.*

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But then virtually all of Allen's post *Love and Death* movies have been blemished, to some degree, by his intellectual and artistic pretensions. If the strongest of them were nonetheless redeemed by their engaging stories, their sympathetic (or, at least, credible) characters, and (above all) their humor, such is not the case here. Throughout *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, one feels strangely distant from the characters, many of whom conform too tidily to Allen prototypes. Lester, for example, is a vapid retread of the Tony Roberts character in *Annie Hall*; Levy (whose big surprise later in the picture is no surprise at all if you've seen *La Dolce Vita*) recalls the aging artist played by Max Von Sydow in *Hannah and Her Sisters*. (Levy is, incidentally, the only character in any of Allen's films whose spoutings on love, death, God, and the meaning of life rise consistently above the sophomoric; it's dismaying, then, to discover that Bergmann—who is, in real life, a Manhattan psychiatrist—improvised most of his own stuff.) Woody Allen is, as ever, Woody Allen, but here, more than usually, he counts on our previous acquaintance with and presumed affection for him to give his character dimension and empathy.

Nor are the situations particularly fresh. As a friend of mine commented, "I wish I had a nickel for every scene in a Woody Allen movie where he proposes marriage to somebody in Central Park." Certainly some of Allen's pet ideas and motifs have worn dangerously thin: the notion of a grown-up protagonist peeking in on an agonizing dinner-table scene of his childhood; the stiff, devout name-dropping of bygone artists, composers, and poets (and of that supreme temple of learning, Columbia University); the celebration of innocence, in the form of children; the celebration of movies as both reality's mirror and its escape hatch; and the celebration of artistry—as invariably personified by Woody Allen—over commercial claptrap. Many of the film's subsidiary characters, moreover, tend to be contrived (Ben with his emblematic blindness; Judah's father with his handy aphorisms), and many of the motivations dubious. (Would Judah really have gotten entangled with a dreary harridan like Dolores? And would his fear of Miriam's wrath really cause him to contemplate murder?)

What damages the film more than anything, however, is its posture toward Judah's and Clifford's respective transgressions. Murder is in the air here, but the ultimate sin in Allen's world is plainly not homicide but fornication. Whereas Judah's debates over whether to have Dolores slaughtered are relatively brief, mannerly, and low-key (coming off as little more than *pro forma*), Clifford's hysterical carryings-on about Halley seem interminable. Truth to tell, Allen is far more captivated by the misdemeanor of sexual dalliance than by the high crime of murder. Underneath all the gags, his is a harsh Old Testament world in which the Jewish husband is sinner and the infidel woman the occasion of sin; Judah and Clifford lust after shiksas in the same way they lust after (respectively) high and pop Western culture. (It seems no coincidence that Judah's favorite composer is Schubert—an Austrian!—and that Clifford is seen viewing a movie with the definitive Wasp title of *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*.) But Allen's apparent newfound esteem for Jehovah feels slick, insincere; though his message is presumably that, in order to behave decently, we must believe God's eyes are on us, he doesn't convince us for a minute that it's a lack of religious conviction that makes possible Judah and Clifford's ethical waverings. (He doesn't even convince us that this is what *he* believes.) *Crimes and Misdemeanors* pays homage to the Almighty, in short, in the same superficial way that earlier Allen films have paid homage to Bergman and Fellini.

• • •

Robert Harling's play *Steel Magnolias*, which can currently be seen at the Lucille Lortel Theater in New York, is a two-act, four-scene, six-character hen session set in a Chinquapin, Louisiana, beauty parlor. The men are all offstage, and a miserable lot they are: Truvy, the bighearted, self-styled "glamour technician," has a spouse who lies around all day and sponges off her; Annelle, her bashful assistant, has just been deserted by a husband who's wanted on drug charges; Ouiser, a wealthy, cantankerous regular patron, has been so embittered by two lousy marriages that she shows affection only to her mangy dog; M'Lynn, another regular, is married to a goofball who spends every spare moment shooting at birds and beasts; and as the play opens, M'Lynn's daughter, Shelby, is about to wed a selfish young lawyer.

The point is clear: men are thoughtless, childish, irresponsible—and they're not even the one thing they're supposed to be, *strong*. When M'Lynn's family suffers a crisis, her mate folds up helplessly, and to her surprise she's the one who hangs tough. They're *all* tough, these delicate flowers of Dixie (thus, of course, the title). And they're funny, too: the catty crosstalk is consistently entertaining. The only problem, aside from the creaky exposition and uneven acting, is that the characters often remind one less of Southern belles than of the boys in Mort Crowley's *The Boys in the Band*: Harling's humor, in other words, can be extremely campy, and one comes across locutions, references, and touches of sensibility here that seem to have less to do with small-town Louisiana womanhood than with the milieu of the thoroughfare—namely, Christopher Street in Greenwich Village—on which the Lucille Lortel Theater is situated. If Tennessee Williams had written *The Women*, it might've come out something like this.

Directed by Herbert Ross from a script by Harling, the movie version of *Steel Magnolias* stays close to the text of the play (though some of the more caustic lines about men and religion have been omitted) while opening up the action quite effectively. The cast is a mixed bag: Dolly Parton is splendidly right for Truvy, whose motto is "There's no such thing as natural beauty," and Olympia Dukakis does a perfect job as Clairee, the rich, gracious, quip-happy widow of the town's longtime mayor. But the neat little part of Annelle is wasted on Daryl Hannah (Flannery O'Connor would've understood this role, but Daryl doesn't), and Julia (*Mystic Pizza*) Roberts barely makes an impression as Shelby.

The big disappointment is Sally Field, who fails to have a single natural moment as M'Lynn, her accent wandering all over the place (but then, so did those in *Gone With the Wind*: bad Southern accents are a proud tradition of Hollywood movies) and her Big Scene toward the end of the movie coming across as little more than a bid for a third Oscar. (You keep expecting her to look into the camera and wail: "Do you still like me?") The sad part is that it's a good, solid role; one would've liked to see Tess Harper, Christine Lahti, or Jessica Lange take a stab at it. As for Shirley MacLaine, she's dreadfully miscast as Ouiser, and her presence makes one realize how similar this story is to her schlocky *Terms of Endearment*, the main difference being that the eccentric, misanthropic, fanatically possessive mother of that movie splits in two here, into the eccentric, misanthropic Ouiser and the fanatically possessive mother M'Lynn.

One wonders why the producers of *Steel Magnolias* bothered to drag this predominantly Yankee cast down bayou way: though it was shot in the author's hometown of Natchitoches, the film only intermittently captures the flavor of the Deep South. For instance, though Harling has fleshed out the *dramatis personae* with a few males (including Tom Skerritt as M'Lynn's husband), the only black person I remember seeing in the whole picture was an affluent-looking guest at Shelby's wedding. Not since Mayberry, on the old "Andy Griffith Show," has anyone committed to celluloid a more thoroughly caucasian Southern burg. (I'm not quota-mongering, you understand; I'm just saying this odd deficiency robs the movie of realism.) It would've helped, too, if instead of opting for the usual big-budget glossy-realistic cinematography, the filmmakers had gone for photography that was just a bit more stylized (or, at least, nearer to the look of *sex, lies, and videotape*, which captured Louisiana nicely without hitting you over the head with atmosphere). And rather than commission the syrupy standard Movie Music that has been provided by Georges Delerue (*Jules et Jim*, *Julia*, *A Little Romance*), they might've done better to slap together a score out of the sort of country-and-western tunes that Harling's play uses as a bridge.

But the film is in many respects an improvement over the two-acter. By adding a few scenes that take place in a hospital, and by transferring much of the beauty-parlor action to M'Lynn's house (and, in the climactic sequence, to a cemetery), Harling lends credibility to the catastrophe at the center of his story, making it—as well as the beauty parlor—seem less of a structural artifice than it does in the play. A number of other big new sequences, furthermore—among them Shelby's wedding, a Christmas festival, and a riverside Easter get-together—are fitting and funny, even if the sight gags (e.g., a wedding cake with gray frosting in the shape of an armadillo) do fall a tad too often into the category of Southern tawdry-grotesque, Beth Henley division. On the whole, indeed, notwithstanding all its imperfections, *Steel Magnolias* is well worth seeing; quite simply, it's a top-notch amusement—a genuinely diverting movie at a time when funny film comedy can seem as rare as magnolias in January. □

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Writer? "A reader moved to emulation."
—Saul Bellow

STOP, THIEVES!

STOLEN WORDS: FORAYS INTO THE ORIGINS AND RAVAGES OF PLAGIARISM
Thomas Mallon/Ticknor & Fields/300 pp. $18.95

Hugh Kenner

Jorge Luis Borges dreamed of a Universal Library from which every thinkable book could be shown to have been plagiarized; it would simply contain, printed and bound, all possible sequencings of characters, not forgetting some hundreds of pages of just "z." Though his Library of Babel is a good deal too big for practicable production, one might still argue that the English language contains, potentially, all that can be said in English, including the sentence you are reading now. Still, did any written language, pre-1922, contain "Mkgnao," James Joyce's transcription of what a hungry cat said? (She also said "Mrkgnao" and even "Mrkrgnao," though the closest her owner could come was "Miaow." Cats are fluent in Cat; humans aren't.)

Cats aside, though, what can be said about plagiarism? We've all read books very like books we've read before. That's especially true if we keep up with political commentary. Yet do Tom Wicker's columns plagiarize Ellen Goodman's? Not at all, though they do write from a common center and could spell one another during sick leaves. We'd have plagiarism should Tom on a lazy afternoon turn to something of Ellen's for sentence structure and sequence, changing a few words now and then to keep things Wickerized. (And how much would he need to change before we'd swung beyond the orbit of proof?)

I'm teasing you with the unthinkable just to suggest how slippery Thomas Mallon's subject is. Generalizations on plagiarism he's found "more perilously porous than those of most others." The best Sam Johnson's great *Dictionary* of 1755 could manage was "Theft; literary adoption of the thoughts or works of another." Thinking "works" might be a misprint for "words," I checked Mallon's quotation back to the source. No, "works" is correct. Johnson was shrewd in seeing how words, even sequences of words, may be Public Domain.

That was especially true in the eighteenth century, when writers were vying to shape a common idiom. Earlier, Shakespeare had aimed differently:

No, this my hand may rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green, one red. . . .

And, unforgettably idiosyncratic, that glowing "incarnadine" is surely stamped as *his* word? Well, Longfellow did venture to use it in 1845, and in 1872 it even turns up in somebody's *History of Columbus, Ohio.* But when epigones borrow it we still sense Shakespeare's weight. Plagiarism? Better, quasi-allusion.

The eighteenth century, however, eschewed gorgeous words like that, words that might carry some individual's stamp. "I find this word but once," wrote Johnson of "incarnadine," proceeding (as was his duty) to cite Shakespeare, with whose canon he sometimes felt stuck. For from Dryden's time through Johnson's what they were aiming at was an idiom of interchangeable parts, shaped toward maximum general effectiveness. A modern instance: Did the B-707 plagiarize the DC-8? Most of us can't tell them apart save by noting that the latter sports fewer windows more widely spaced. Both were shaped to get 100-plus passengers economically airborne on four jet engines. By necessity, the two designs converged. Likewise, translations of Homer into rhymed couplets were meant to get any English dabbler airborne, and when someone arrived at an especially neat phrasing it got taken up by his successors with no talk of plagiary.

Moreover, Pope's *Odyssey* was only partly by Pope; so common was the idiom, the great poet felt secure in subcontracting it. (Imagine Eliot subcontracting chunks of *Murder in the Cathedral*!) And, in that age of censorship, Who had Written the Anonymous What was the buzzing coffee-house topic. (Johnson even doubted if Swift had written *A Tale of a Tub.*)

All of which I go into because I fear Mr. Mallon scamps it. The eighteenth century, he'll have us know, was the age that discovered Literary Property. As it did. For it was the century when capitalism's printers were coming into dominance (and from them stemmed the concept of verbal "property"). But it was also the century that sought to regularize not only spelling but idiom (and, yes, how print does regularize). That meant, not only could you no longer spell your name five different ways, you could not, either, write "the multitudinous seas incarnadine." You might write, oh, "With crimson lustre tint the pallid flood." (And, Eureka!—a rhyme for "blood!")

Anybody at all might feel free to use "crimson lustre," anybody else "pallid flood." Let those phrases not be joined by "tint" and there'd be no problem. Or let "tint" join them, and lo—perhaps—your line! Canonized!

But alas, there's Sterne, lifting paragraphs from Robert Burton; alas, too, there's Coleridge a generation later, lifting from Schelling and Schlegel. Sterne —it's an outside chance—might have assumed his lifts would be spotted and dubbed witty allusions. Coleridge, though—well, Coleridge. What knowledge, what commonality, can a writer assume? Also, at what moment in time?

T. S. Eliot once said he'd appended the Notes to *The Waste Land* to spike the guns of such critics as had earlier accused him of plagiarism. And there's heavy irony when Eliot diligently refers "The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne" to *Antony and Cleopatra*, II.i.190, while omitting to ascribe "Those are pearls that were his eyes" to anyone (for, come on, readers must know *some*thing, if only a tag from *The Tempest*). It's even funnier when Eliot refers "A noise of horns and motors" to "A noise of horns and hunting," from Day's *Parliament of Bees*, which he can feel sure not one reader in a thousand has heard of, even though Day does afford glimpses of a lady's "naked skin." And it's a weakness in the web Thomas Mallon weaves that he never mentions *The Waste Land.*

Mallon is at his strongest with a clear-cut academic case, about a man named Jayme ("Jay") Aaron Sokolow, now forty-four, who concurred with an outside reviewer's judgment that what Texas Tech (Lubbock)'s His-

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tory Department needed was "a good New York Jew" and proceeded to crash his way tenurewards with the aid of an unpublished dissertation by a man at Amherst named Nissenbaum. Thus:

Nissenbaum: "But, for all that, it would be misleading to see the Nicholses as a kind of nineteenth-century anticipation of Masters and Johnson. . . . Their attitudes were . . . rooted in the very spirit they appeared to reject."

Sokolow: "Yet it would be completely misleading to see Thomas and his wife Mary as nineteenth-century critics of Victorian sexuality who glorified sexual intercourse. Their defense of sexuality was rooted in the very spirit which it appeared to reject."

Nissenbaum even had the disheartening experience of being three times asked, by three university presses, to appraise what Sokolow had plagiarized from him. Each time he told them the facts. Each time they, yes, rejected the Sokolow typescript, but asserted no reason and also took no action. Standard procedure for several years, says Mallon, was to "reply to words [Sokolow] had stolen with words that were minced."

Sokolow stole from more people than Nissenbaum. One of his techniques was to supply one footnote, suggesting a general indebtedness, then lift from a published source whole bunches of unascribed words. He seems to have assumed no one would notice. He was right. Lubbock folk who knew a published source by heart didn't notice. For people haven't time to read incoming hirees' dissertations. There is (and there's got to be) a presumption of trust. That's what Sokolow (correctly) presumed on.

And even when a publication (*The Eighteenth Century*) felt driven to apology for a plagiarism-ridden Sokolow piece, it "of course" did not "condone such practices" but it never once named Sokolow.

Fear of lawsuits? Likely. ("Why didn't the cobra bite the lawyer? Professional courtesy." No, that's not from Mallon.) Fear of just egg-on-the-face? Surely. And Sokolow's Lubbock record now contains no negative vote about tenure. He simply said he'd resign. As he did. And by '83 "he was working at the National Endowment for the Humanities" . . . "monitoring the grants awarded to university professors for the pursuit of their research."

I've been stung myself by the general-indebtedness footnote that proceeds to subsume whole paragraphs of barely altered lifts. With lawyers grimacing all around this kraal, I'll name no instances, though I've two in mind. They employ, both, the everyone-knows-this presumption, that what someone (e.g., myself) labored to establish is, since my labors, safely in the public domain, though with traces of my wording somehow gummed all over it.

I hope I've not sounded negative about Mallon. He's done admirably with a topic that, as he says, is nigh impossible to pin down. Sterne's "plagiaries," recognized, become allusions, like the tags in *The Waste Land*. Coleridge's copious lifts from German philosophers? Well, did STC assume, likewise, a reader who'd spot their provenance and nod approvingly? In *Coleridge: The Damaged Archangel*, Norman Fruman thinks not. He charges Coleridge with just cutting corners—stealing. Other Coleridgeans think otherwise. They adduce either allusion, or else an unconscious precision of verbal memory, that overrode what STC meant for paraphrase.

Recently, Apple Computer has been dragging Microsoft through the courts, claiming that the "look and feel" of sundry Apple programs is infringed. Look and feel! Does a deluxe Holiday Inn like the one near JFK airport infringe on the Conrad Hilton "look and feel"? It's arguable; though at Hilton, as far as I know, they've not thought to summon the lawyers. They may rest serene in the conviction that any fool can tell a Holiday Inn from a Hilton. On the other hand, though, Anita Kornfield thought the look and feel of her novel *Vintage* had been snatched by CBS for the TV series "Falcon Crest," and the court said no, it hadn't. The only thing TV's "Falcon Crest" had plagiarized, it seemed, was TV. As "Falcon Crest's" creator, Earl Hamner, put it, "TV is very imitative of itself."

As, at bottom, let's face it, is all storytelling. Robert A. Heinlein, for instance, once stated that there are only four plots:

(1) Boy Meets Girl.
(2) The Little Tailor
(3) The Man Who Learned Better
(4) "If This Goes On . . ."

Use any of those—*Romeo and Juliet*, *Beowulf*, *Candide*, *1984*—and (in theory) expect a Look and Feel suit. Does it really happen? No way.

What does really happen is a lot of flak when a Jacob Epstein in *Wild Oats* (1979) lifts not a plot but just sentences from a novel by Martin Amis. (Amis: "I could feel, gradually playing on my features, a look of queasy hope." Epstein: "He could feel, playing across his face, a look of queasy hope." Eight words in twelve identical.) Epstein blamed careless note-consulting. He then rose to Executive Story Editorship of TV's "L.A. Law," a domain of safety where there's no such thing as plagiarism, because (see above) there's nothing but.

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If I were Martin Amis I'd feel violated, yes. Then I'd note that Epstein's novel contains a teacher who feels violated by plagiarized term papers. Those come (at $5.50 a page) from outfits that advertise in the likes of the *New York Times Book Review*, not to mention *Rolling Stone*. He decides not to turn the perpetrators in ("Who the hell am I to set myself up as some moral paragon?"), and Martin Amis likewise didn't sue. He may have reflected that bearers of noted names can feel special pressures. Remember Charles van Doren cheating on "The $64,000 Question"?

Yet since Homer the richness of literature has lain in allusiveness: in its evocations of what Eliot called "that vanished mind of which our mind is a continuation." Pound used "incarnadine" twice, splendidly, in his 52nd Canto, and did Shakespeare's heirs exist and bring suit they'd but demean themselves and their ancestor. But that is literature. On the other hand, there's, well—oh, . . .

New York Times, 6 June, 1980:

Stanford University said today it had learned that its teaching assistant's handbook section on plagiarism had been plagiarized by the University of Oregon. Stanford issued a release saying Oregon officials had conceded that the plagiarism section and other parts of its handbook were identical with the Stanford guidebook. Oregon officials apologized and said they would revise their guidebook.

Question: Why revise it? No human need feel violated. Humans don't write guidebooks, committees do. If it's adequately legalistic, leave it alone. Would Texas take Utah to the Supreme Court should their statutes against murder prove almost identically worded? I'd feel nervous if they weren't. But then, I'm not a committee. □

THE IRON LADY: A BIOGRAPHY OF MARGARET THATCHER

Hugo Young/Farrar, Straus & Giroux/570 pp. $25

James Bowman

Mrs. Thatcher could have done a lot worse than Hugo Young if she herself had gone trolling for a biographer in the polluted waters of the British intelligentsia. He really does make an effort to be dispassionate and even-handed about a politician who routinely inspires the most appallingly bitter hatred among the members of the left-leaning intellectual class to which he himself belongs.

He provides some samples of the venom. Dr. Jonathan Miller, theatrical and operatic director and impresario, finds the lady "loathsome, repulsive in almost every way" and despises "her odious suburban gentility and sentimental, saccharine patriotism, catering to the worst elements of commuter idiocy." Young correctly identifies in this both the snobbery of his own class and the howls of "the new class" being deprived of a few of its cushy subsidies.

Moreover, in spite of a leftish bias to which I shall return presently, Young is the sort of contemporary historian who must agonize over whether or not he should put the word "peace," as in "peace movement," in quotation marks—but who puts it in quotation marks. All credit to him for so far transcending the limitations which his social and intellectual background has placed upon the scope of his sympathies.

In addition, the book is well constructed, marshals its facts impressively, is jargon-free, and mostly well written—though occasionally it tries a little too hard for effect:

Oxford in 1943 was a university in the middle of a war. Sun-drenched quadrangles and lazy days on the river formed a smaller part of the undergraduate experience than fire-watching and the clatter of marching troops. Many of the young men who should have been there were either fighting or dead.

Gee whiz! Happily, the clichéd "you are there" atmospherics from someone who obviously wasn't there—the sun-drenched quadrangles, the clatter of marching troops—and the historical banalities are dropped as a bad idea once he gets on with the part of his story where he really was there: his subject's astonishing rise to dominance of the British political scene.

For American readers he also performs a valuable service by clearing a way through some of the tangled undergrowth of British political infighting which must appear all but impenetrable to transatlantic eyes. In particular, his account of the Westland affair, which almost, and almost incomprehensibly, brought about the prime minister's downfall, is exemplary. If we can't understand why a dispute between two cabinet ministers over who should own a helicopter company was such a big deal, it's largely because our political arrangements have so far degenerated into squalid and self-serving legalism, that we need Young's careful untangling of the affair as an introduction to a system still largely based on honor and unwritten codes of behavior.

So much for the good stuff about this book. For however hard he tries to escape it, Young is still far more the prisoner of his background than he manages to persuade us Mrs. Thatcher is of hers. Hers is that of small-town provincial, shop-keeping, Methodist, lower-middle class municipal worthies and his is that of the upper-middle class business, professional, and intellectual community which habitually sneers at such people. Young isn't as shameless about it as Jonathan Miller, but he can't help sneering too.

This might not be so bad if it were confined to the little sneers often to be found in chapter headings and picture captions which he seems to think are frightfully sophisticated put-downs—La Fille d'Epicier, Those Poor Shopkeepers! Vanquishing Lucifer, Gloriana Imperatrix, the Tsarina meets the peasants—but it goes far beyond such disfiguring snobbery into a habit of mind and outlook which makes it finally impossible for him to understand Mrs. Thatcher and the political phenomenon she represents. He has so often heard it said that she is the product of a small, narrow-minded, moralistic background and that she needed to cling to simple verities, like monetarism—and then has so often said it himself—that he can't see her in any other way.

His standard liberal political biases are clearly enough on display. Cutting the top rate of tax from 83 to 60 percent in her first term was "the first of many massive gifts to the rich." The firm anti-Communism which gave her her sobriquet "suggested a one-dimensional approach to foreign policy" and "seemed to lack sophistication." The Toxteth and Brixton riots of 1981 were "apparently . . . a consequence of her economic policy." Words like "suggested," "seemed," and "apparently" are useful fig leaves to adorn the business end of the unbiased historian!

Above all, any suggestion that social problems have anything to do with individual moral responsibility really makes this writer cross. For instance, the suggestion by Britain's chief rabbi that blacks might work themselves out of poverty, as Jews had done, is treated as an example of "racialism." And Mrs. Thatcher's own religious beliefs "reduced to simple issues of personal morality highly complex questions of social and economic behavior."

In fact, it is precisely "complexity" that Young himself has trouble with. For, besides his biases, another factor working to limit his understanding is frequent preference for a more journalistic than historical point of view. In his eagerness to chase the little dramas of day to day and year to year political life, he misses the larger, more complex dramas of political movements and ideas.

He loves, for instance, to detect his subject in the "subterfuge" of trying to look good on television or arriving at Downing Street with the Prayer of St. Francis (which he inevitably informs us is in fact from the nineteenth century) ready to read off a card. He is always on the alert for people who say something different one day from what they had said the day before and takes a childish delight in describing these as "conversions" or "somersaults"—radical changes of mind which betoken the guilt either of those who have had to admit error or of those who have changed for discreditable reasons.

Young's account of Mrs. Thatcher's attitude toward Gorbachev, for example, juxtaposes her saying that "we can do business together" with her background of anti-Communism and comes up with something which he calls "the new realism." What he is really saying is that his mental picture of her anti-Communism had been such a caricature that her willingness to deal with Gorbachev forced him into revising it—only he projected the change in himself onto her.

In the same way, her change from critic to backer of SDI took place within the context of a hierarchy of values. Her initial concerns about feasibility and the credibility of deterrence gave way to a greater concern for the strength of the alliance with the

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U.S.—and without giving up the reassertion of the strategic importance of deterrence. To Young, however, "she seemed [that word again!] to place herself behind the very doctrine which previously she had challenged."

In other words, the little moral drama in which the righteous journalist exposes political duplicity or chicanery is so in command of his imagination that he is incapable of seeing that sometimes neither error nor duplicity and chicanery are the best explanations. In fact, the complexity of most political realities is such that they require different sorts of responses at different times. Not to recognize this is the more to be regretted in one whose principal charge against Mrs. Thatcher is that she is hidebound by a narrow, constricting moralism.

It would be interesting to see how he would treat the situation that has developed in Hong Kong since the book was written. In the pre-Tiananmen Square perspective, he censures her for her initial reluctance to "give in" to Chinese demands for return of the colony. Now that she is being faulted for the same "giving in," it is hard to believe that Young's voice would not be added to the chorus of disapproval of her "inflexibility" on this issue.

Such a critique of her economic policies, made repeatedly, is a constant irritant in Young's book, as is his repeated reassertion of the failure of monetarism, to which he resolutely refuses to lend any sympathetic understanding. The level of his economic idiocy may be judged from the following summing up of "the Thatcher miracle":

> At 2.9 percent a year between 1981 and 1987, the growth in gross domestic product per head put Britain second only to Japan in the international league. Along with the greater productivity, this helped create the impression of a new Britain. But 2.9 percent was also the growth figure between 1968 and 1973, when it left Britain close to the bottom of the league, and was regarded as a dismal performance. If there was a miracle in the 1980s, it was of a relatively mundane dimension.

The use of a per annum growth rate percentage as if it were an absolute index to economic well-being quite unconnected to international conditions and competitiveness is a wonderfully demagogic bit of sophistry. The last sentence also shows that there are occasional lapses in the quality of the prose—and yet, if taken out, dusted off, and turned into a deliberate oxymoron it might well serve as a better summing up of Mrs. Thatcher than "the iron lady." Rather let it be "the mundane miracle." Hugo Young has given us Mrs. Thatcher in spite of himself. □

ETHICS, POLITICS AND THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL: EXECUTIVE POWER, EXECUTIVE VICE 1789-1989

Terry Eastland/National Legal Center for the Public Interest (1000 16th St., NW Washington, DC 20036)/187 pp. $10.95 paper

Edwin M. Yoder, Jr.

Section VI of the 1978 Ethics in Government Act, familiarly known as the "special prosecutor" or "independent counsel" statute, has been described as a child of Watergate. And so it is. But its lineage is longer. Conceived with the aim of cleansing the higher reaches of the executive branch of ethical wrongdoing, this law is the by-blow of a confused era. It reflects a shift in the philosophy of American government from structural to legalistic safeguards of the public interest.

The framers of the Constitution sought with a craftsman's elegance to draw large dynamic effects from economical means. Among those means, the separation of powers principle and its associated institutional arrangements are paramount, an "essential precaution in favor of liberty" as James Madison said. Those who cannot grasp this central truth miss the "science" of American federal government.

Terry Eastland certainly grasps that essence, and his new book *Ethics, Politics and the Independent Counsel* accordingly comes as a breath of fresh air. With two notable judicial decisions —Judge Larry Silberman's overturning the law in the U.S. Court of Appeals and Justice Antonin Scalia's dissent in *Morrison* v. *Olson* (the case in which the Supreme Court in 1988 upheld the law) —this superb monograph is virtually our only mature and searching dissection of an ignoble experiment with American liberties.

Eastland's treatment of the subject is largely historical, as such an institutional study must be. He begins by tracing the history of "special prosecutors" in earlier episodes of scandal and distrust, ranging as far back as the Grant Administration. He then traces the evolution of the 1978 law to its origins in the Watergate crisis and shows how drastically, in mechanics and effects, it departs from custom and how completely it warps the principle of political accountability.

The story of the law really begins with the firing of Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox on October 20, 1973, in a dispute over the judicially ordered release of the telltale White House tapes. Until then, special prosecutors had been an abnormal but useful adjunct—but adjunct only—to the self-policing capacities of the executive branch. They always had been "independent," as Cox was, yet were understood to derive their franchises from the President and to remain fully accountable to him—for the same reason that Presidents are by specific constitutional command accountable for the faithful execution of the laws.

This traditional understanding of the role, powers, and function of special prosecutors was consumed by the "firestorm" of the Cox firing, though that fact took some time to register. No matter that Robert Bork, as acting attorney general, moved swiftly to see to the appointment of a new special prosecutor, Leon Jaworski; nor that Jaworski, a former American Bar Association president and a man of great integrity and intelligence, proceeded as energetically as Cox to push the Watergate investigation forward. The impression of distrust was indelibly imprinted, and the faith of Congress and the public in the capacity of Presidents or their Departments of Justice to investigate themselves impartially had been fatally impaired. Congress had become obsessed with the notion—really, the *idée fixe*—that the presidency cannot police itself. Even if it could, it would not be believed by the public to be doing so—according to the new way of thinking. In the age of media politics, "appearances" now matter as much as, perhaps more than, truth.

Immediately after the Cox uproar, as Eastland recounts, eight different bills proposing various forms of "independence" for special prosecutors appeared in the congressional hoppers. In the ultimate flight of whiggery, the usually sensible Sen. Sam J. Ervin, Jr. went so far as to propose the entire amputation of the Department of Justice from connection or accountability to the White House. This radical proposal for an "independent" Justice Department was naively taken up by Jimmy Carter, though later quashed by his more astute attorney general, Griffin Bell. In the end, the drastic alternative of an "independent" Justice Department was not seriously considered.

Nonetheless, it was the common denominator of nearly all the proposals for legislative action after the Cox sacking that there must be some mechanism whereby special prosecutors, when needed (and the assumption was that they would be needed more and more), would be independently appointed (preferably by judges) and removable only for gross impropriety or, in the domesticated parlance of the current statute, "good cause." Thus in 1978, with the backing of the Carter Administration, congressional provision was made for their appointment of these officials, insulated by law from the political control which is normally the precondition of their accountability in law enforcement. They would, moreover, be routinely appointed at any breath of scandal unless the attorney general, in effect, found the triggering charges against some high official frivolous; and their appointment was

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vested in a special branch of the U.S. Court of Appeals, which would also determine powers and terms of reference.

As Eastland observes, the independent counsel law marked a historic abdication of both "the politics of ethics" and "the politics of malfeasance." The framers' answer to the unavoidable blight of occasional misbehavior and corruption in high office was structural and political, not legalistic. The framers assumed that when abuses of power and trust occurred, countervailing forces—various checks and balances, including the ultimate sanction of impeachment—would be mobilized by public indignation and would in time suffice to correct them. There really is no significant evidence that they were wrong—certainly not in the Watergate episode or its eventual remedies. So one is driven to ask, as Eastland does, what larger currents could explain this extraordinary departure from constitutional tradition.

Eastland finds a persuasive explanation in what amounts to a shift of political mood and fashion. After half a century of uncritical faith in strong presidential government, Vietnam and Watergate brought great disillusionment. The presidency, once uncritically revered, was redesignated—in some instances by those who had been its most worshipful exponents—as "imperial" and threatening. Its imperialistic tendencies assumed, any devices for restraining Caesar became, by definition, a good thing, no matter what violence they might do—or redundancy add—to the framers' design. And as Eastland shrewdly notes, the fact that the Republicans have lately "owned" the White House, while the Democrats seem to have a permanent lock on Congress, means that generally it is Republican administrations which suffer the delays, inconveniences, inefficiencies, and inequities put in the way of orderly government by proliferating and meddlesome special prosecutors.

I am sure that Eastland is right, but other factors also figure. American government is beset everywhere by a tendency to substitute prolix legal codes (to recall a famous John Marshall phrase in *McCulloch* v. *Maryland*) for institutional dynamics. The elegant functionalism of the framers' original plan is in danger of evolving into a misshapen Rube Goldberg-like encumbrance with a fifth (and even a sixth, seventh, and eighth) wheel. This is no doubt the result of government oversupplied—infested might be a more appropriate term—with lawyers, who know far more of tort law than of the *Federalist* papers or Madisonian theory.

Easily the most objectionable feature of the "independent counsel" law is that it impairs the separation of powers principle, hence orderly administration, and not merely because the law inappropriately vests the appointment of these powerful executive officials in the courts of law.

This is the sort of error we usually look to the Supreme Court to correct. But Eastland's withering analysis of the Court's opinion in *Morrison* v. *Olson* reinforces the impression that this 1988 decision was one of the Court's stranger abdications of constitutional rigor, not less strange for coming after a string of pronouncements in which the same Court had taken a near fundamentalist approach to the separation of powers. A Court which noisily gagged on the delegation of minor and ministerial "trigger" powers of budgetary sequestration (in the Gramm-Rudman act) to a congressional creature proceeded to swallow, with a smile, the assignment of vast executive and inquisitorial powers to a creature of the judiciary. Eastland shows, moreover, that the *Morrison* Court made nonsense of the "inferior officers" clause of Article III and a hash of its traditional removal-powers jurisprudence. One searches the Court's opinion in vain for any rigorous discussion of the deeper constitutional issues. It comes down, apparently, to a limp exercise in necessitarianism. Whatever Congress wants badly enough, Congress gets, so long as it doesn't do immediate and palpable violence to the Constitution.

Eastland also examines the collateral effects of the law—its tendency to trivialize issues by "criminalizing" policy disputes. (Who remembers, though it may have been very important, why Congress and Theodore Olson came to blows over environmental policy?) He notes its unfairness to the special class of executive officers singled out for its inquiries (as when one special prosecutor declined to indict attorney general Edwin Meese yet branded him, by a sort of *ipse dixit*, as a functional criminal in his "final report"); its narrowing of the broad perspective in which prosecutorial discretion is ordinarily exercised, which encourages the pursuit of persons rather than crimes, and so warps good judgment that one special prosecutor even attempted, in violation of all diplomatic protocol, to subpoena the Canadian ambassador as a witness in the Mike Deaver case.

Given all that is wrong with this law, one would think the prospects for repeal excellent. That is not the case. The law has now been twice renewed, in both instances with the signature of Ronald Reagan. It will again come up for renewal in 1992. But as Eastland notes, Congress seems to want more, not less, activity under the law, more not fewer special prosecutors. Unless President Bush vetoes the law in an election year—an act of constitutional rectification requiring more boldness and imagination than we have learned to expect of him—we seem to be stuck with it.

Ethics, Politics and the Independent Counsel is a fine and even magisterial piece of work. But I must register mild consternation that Eastland, having so persuasively demolished the present law, proposes at the end a less irregular alternative that would keep institutionalized special prosecutors with us. This is puzzling. It is a considerate and politic proposal, perhaps. Certainly Eastland's substitute, if Congress adopted it, would be far better than what we have. But any concession of the usefulness of special prosecutors as a continuing presence on the political scene tends to undermine the really compelling argument against them—which is that no such animal is needed. The Constitution of the United States, as it came from the hands of the framers, provides ample structural insurance against the abuse of power. What it does not do, of course, is give the policing of ethical conduct precedence over the vastly more important requirements of energetic and accountable government. Eastland is smack on the point when he writes that "under the traditional politics of malfeasance, the most important question does not concern accused individuals and their legal fate but accountable presidents and their political fate." Congress, with the limp acquiescence of the Supreme Court, has stood that essential priority of good government on its head.

For those of us who believe the framers got it right, there can be only one tenable position. It is the full and uncompromising repeal of this bad law and a return to uncluttered constitutional government as, before 1978, we had known it for 190 years. □

THE TEMPTING OF AMERICA:
THE POLITICAL SEDUCTION OF THE LAW
Robert H. Bork/The Free Press/432 pp. $22.50

BATTLE FOR JUSTICE:
HOW THE BORK NOMINATION SHOOK AMERICA
Ethan Bronner/W. W. Norton/399 pp. $22.50

George Szamuely

In June 1978, concurring with four of his Supreme Court colleagues that the Davis School of Medicine of the University of California had not violated the constitutional rights of Allan Bakke by denying him admission on account of his not being a member of the right racial minority, Justice Harry Blackmun declared that "in order to get beyond racism we must first take account of race. . . . And in order to treat some people equally we must first treat them differently." There was, of course, nothing startling in these words; it was nonetheless odd to hear them coming from the mouth of a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States—supposedly one of the nine wisest men in the land. In his logical reasoning Blackmun's argument sounded remarkably similar to the notorious old Communist omelette and eggs apologia. Injustices will have to be perpetrated for the time being so that justice can prevail later. What is the loss of freedom of one today when set against the gain of freedom for so many tomorrow (with that date, needless to say, receding into the ever more distant future)?

There was a good reason for this similarity. Not that Blackmun was a Communist or a Communist sympathizer or anything like that. But his words expressed the same irritation and frustration with the "formal freedoms" of bourgeois society that Marxists, among innumerable other species of radicals, have always shared. What is the use of everyone enjoying the equal protection of the laws if everyone was not also enjoying equality? As Anatole France had famously put it—in words approvingly quoted straight from *Bartlett's* by Senator Edward Kennedy during the Bork confirmation hearings—"The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread."

Now, as a matter of fact, Anatole France had got his philosophy of law right. The laws, in their "majestic equality," are like the rules of a game; they define the conditions under which play is possible in such a way as to facilitate it, not so as to prescribe who will win and who will lose. If they were

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to do that, no one would want to take part. Boris Becker happens to be the best tennis player in the world, but one could change the rules of the game in such a way that every reader of *The American Spectator*, say, would be assured of victory over him. It is doubtful, however, if either they or he would bother to turn up for such a contest, because whatever it may be, it will certainly not be tennis. In much the same manner one can "fix" the laws under which we live in such a way that some people will always be assured of coming out on top, but the common human endeavor would no longer merit the designation "society." For in "society," as in any game, there will be winners and losers and hence inequality. The anguished cry of the poet Anatole France and the sober reasoning of Justice Harry Blackmun express the same sanguine view that the equal protection of the laws should be done away with since they sanction the continued existence of inequality, whether between rich and poor or between white and black. Both men then subscribe to the notion that inequality is in some way synonymous with injustice and that therefore the laws which allow such a state of affairs to come into being are in some fundamental way unjust.

Historically, the "formal freedoms" of bourgeois society—despite all the prosperity they helped bring about—have been vulnerable to the charge that they also generated inequalities and hence injustices. The great egalitarian political movements of the contemporary era never paid that much attention to law as such. For the Marxists, it was something the strong imposed on the weak, the owners of the means of production on their employees. Law sanctioned the perpetuation of injustice, certainly. But the only way to be rid of the latter was first to seize political power and then to change the law.

In America, however, where bourgeois "formal freedoms" were more strongly entrenched than elsewhere, both on account of the traditions and practices of its people and also in its Constitution, there was never really very much chance of the arrival to power of an egalitarian political movement speaking on behalf of the "exploited masses" or whoever. At the same time hostility to the bourgeois order is no less manifest here than anywhere else. Consequently in the United States one would have to make believe that a change in power relations has taken place. In a democracy laws cannot be changed unless a majority so desires it. Presidents can act through Executive Orders, but they too are answerable to the electorate. That leaves the judiciary, filled with lifelong appointees and answerable to no one.

The term "judicial activism" and the name of Robert Bork will forever be intertwined. By the former one means the large-scale social engineering that the American courts have sanctioned in the last two decades. Sweeping busing programs; court orders as to where new housing is to be built; court-imposed hiring practices; determinations as to how many tax dollars it is appropriate for a school district to spend on a child's education; decisions on the comparable worth of women's work—the courts undertook a vast array of social, economic, and political programs, not one of which was it particularly qualified to accomplish, and for not one of which had it any legislative mandate. Their rulings were bound by a vague notion of the Fourteenth Amendment as well as the poorly reasoned precedents of recent Supreme Court decisions.

Most of Robert Bork's intellectual career had been devoted to attacking the judiciary's usurpation of the prerogatives of democratically accountable legislatures. Thus when President Reagan nominated him to be Justice Powell's successor on the Supreme Court in June 1987, it was hardly surprising that the opposition to him was so fierce. The stakes were very high. America's two-decade old social experiment would be wound down. If Bork's concept of the "original understanding" of the Constitution were to become an essential ingredient in contemporary judicial reasoning, then Justice William Douglas's famous "penumbras formed by emanations"—by which all kinds of fundamental rights could be discovered lying hidden within the Constitution which none of the framers had dreamt of placing there—would be overturned. Rights would come to mean the rights of free citizens with duties and responsibilities, not individual interests or group entitlements or rights to "be let alone," in Justice Blackmun's eminently forgettable phrase.

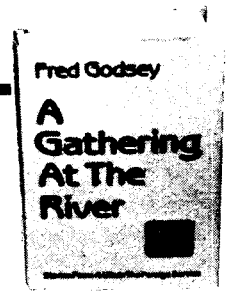
Would America's future, in other words, be decided by a left-liberal elite or by a largely conservative majority? In the struggle for the Bork nomination, the lines of battle that had by now become a familiar part of the American political landscape since the 1960s were once again drawn up. Needless to say, truth was an early casualty. But this was only to be expected. What is surprising is that Bork's supporters should have been so surprised by it.

Ethan Bronner's *Battle for Justice* gives a very useful and fair account of the entire nomination from its beginning to its wretched end. Along the way he records most of the disgraceful slanders that were perpetrated against Bork; the alacrity with which the left mobilized against him; the disastrous advice to which he was subject from, among others, Lloyd Cutler, that led to his being presented as a "moderate," someone in the "judicial mainstream," a worthy successor to Justice Lewis Powell, who had acted as the so-called swing vote (ensuring majorities, for instance, against the hapless Allan Bakke); as well as the intellectual mediocrity and slimy political opportunism of many of his foes like Senator Howell Heflin, who had accused him of enjoying a "strange lifestyle." As for Bork's attempt to pass himself off as a moderate, Bronner sharply concludes that "It opened up the administration and Bork to a charge of deception. This was precisely the kind of accusation that would offer waffling senators a hook on which to hang their rejection. It would allow them to say that Bork's integrity and predictability concerned them more than his ideology." At the same time Bronner exaggerates the extent of Bork's "confirmation conversion." The judge could hardly declare in his testimony that he did not intend to be bound by Supreme Court precedents! Nor did he accede to the simple-minded notion that the Fourteenth Amendment applies to women in the way he considers it does to blacks.

Nonetheless, given the intense pressure he was subjected to, it was understandable that Bork was not able in his testimony to make that vigorous attack on "judicial activism" which many of his admirers expected him to. In his new book, *The Tempting of America*, he more than makes up for it. He not only presents here a history of judicial activism, starting back almost at the time of the framing of the Constitution, he combines it with a vigorous restatement of his case for returning to an "original understanding" of that document as well as a convincing refutation of the opponents of this method of judicial reasoning.

The book is at its best when dissecting the absurdity of Justice Douglas's arguments in the *Griswold* v. *Connecticut* case, whereby he claimed to have discovered a "right of privacy" within the Bill of Rights that no one had hitherto realized was there and thus arrived at the conclusion that the right to use contraceptives was a fundamental right of the citizen. It was of course this very "right of privacy" that would form the basis of the *Roe* v. *Wade* ruling striking down as unconstitutional state laws banning abortion (yet another endeavor suddenly discovered to be a fundamental right). It reappeared in the *Bowers* v. *Hardwick* case of 1986 when the right to engage in homosexual sex was just one vote short of also being declared a fundamental right of the American citizen.

To their enemies, the "formal freedoms" of the bourgeois order have never really been worth having, first, because they generated inequalities and hence a sense of self-esteem that was dependent on others and, second, because they were not the freedoms of one's dreams and longings which, need-



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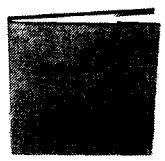

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less to say, are thought to be sexual in nature. The bourgeois order hence was neither prescriptive enough nor permissive enough. And while Bork is overwhelmingly powerful in his criticisms of the Supreme Court when it has, wittingly or unwittingly, served as the battering ram for the second line of attack, he is less convincing when he comes to deal with the first.

The *Brown* v. *Board of Education* ruling has gone down in American folklore as the noblest exercise in judicial activism. Segregation, an American national scandal and a source of international embarrassment, was brought to an end by the actions of nine wise men. Bork himself commends the ruling as a "great and correct decision," though he does have some fun ridiculing Justice Warren's opinion that segregation was wrong because modern findings have allegedly discovered that it "generates a feeling of inferiority as to . . . status in the community that may affect . . . hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone." Bork would have done away with this psychological mumbo-jumbo and had the court declare that segregation was inherently unequal and hence in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.

But it is just here that problems arise. The amendment talks of the "equal protection of the laws" and it is not immediately obvious that anyone was actually being denied that. Would one say for instance that whites in the South were being denied the "equal protection of the laws"? Obviously not. But one would probably say blacks were, even though what one really meant was that blacks were enjoying facilities vastly inferior to those of whites. In other words, it was the fact of inequality that came to be seen to be in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. But once *de jure* segregation was eliminated, *de facto* segregation nonetheless remained. Blacks attended schools in black districts; whites in white districts. It was not difficult to show that conditions were unequal in the two sets of schools. Court-mandated desegregation soon enough became court-mandated enforced integration, or busing—and all of it flowing from the *Brown* opinion that held that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." As Thomas Sowell has pointed out, "Implicit in *Brown* from the outset . . . was a substitution of a very different process—one in which children were to be assigned to schools by race instead of without regard to race."

The way out of this should have been to outlaw segregation. It was disgraceful that it had not been done decades earlier. Legislation merely ensuring equality of opportunity would have freed America from all the troubles that the Equal Protection Clause created. It is somewhat surprising to find Robert Bork, normally the champion of the prerogatives of democratically accountable lawmakers to effect changes in the law, being so sanguine about the influence of the *Brown* ruling.

The failure of Robert Bork to get on the Supreme Court is a great national loss. Could things have turned out differently? Bronner echoes the arguments of conservatives who insist that if only Bork had done an "Ollie North" he would have made it, as well as those of liberals who insist that if only he had tried to out-Kennedy Kennedy in his passions for rights, social justice, and so on he would have made it. Today, such arguments sound silly. With a Democrat-dominated Senate, and a presidency severely enfeebled by the Iran-contra affair, Bork's chances were pretty slim from the beginning. The best one can say is that Justice Anthony Kennedy has turned out to be a good substitute; that association with the ACLU helped do in Dukakis the following year; that Bork's book is a bestseller; and that Kennedy, Biden, and Metzenbaum are nowhere on the political horizon. Moreover, Bork's notion of the "original understanding" is likely to be an important matter of debate in the coming years. What is at issue are those "formal freedoms" that are enshrined in the Constitution. Which means the preservation of the laws "in their majestic equality," as Anatole France would not have them, rather than laws which prescribe results, as Robert Bork's enemies would have them. □

THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF IMMIGRATION
Julian L. Simon/Basil Blackwell/399 pp. $39.95

Gregory A. Fossedal

Perhaps the most striking and even the most important thing about economist Julian Simon's new book on immigration is, simply, its embarkation point.

Most discussion of the issue in Congress and the press starts from the notion that people entering this country are at least something of a new drain on our wealth; only the question of how negative these economic effects are is open to discussion: the trick, given our commitment to freedom of emigration, racial pluralism, and other goals, is to mitigate this necessary evil as much as we can. Whether it hurts a little or a lot, it's still like visiting the dentist.

In *The Economic Consequences of Immigration*, Simon defends with solid and extensive data his refreshing counter-thesis: that, in general, immigrants add more to our stock of capital, and maybe even our pool of physical resources, than they subtract. Each cluster of people added—certainly within the relevant levels of, say, 500,000 to two million immigrants a year—is a net plus, not a minus.

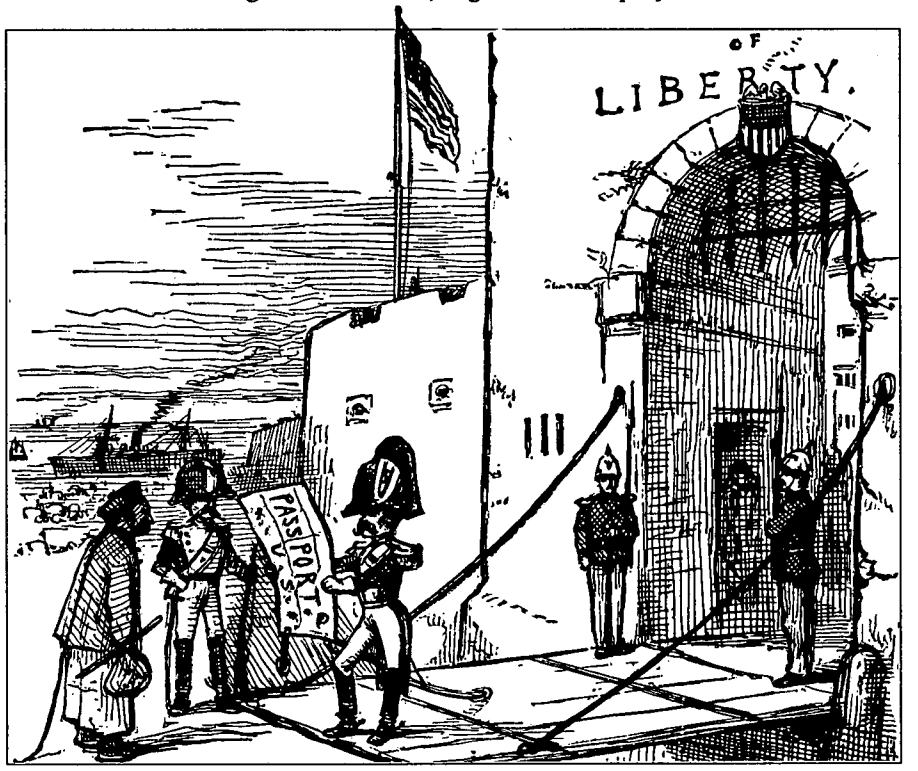
Analysis of the effects of immigration, and of immigration policies, thus becomes more of a trip to the smorgasbord, with the U.S. happily choosing among a plenitude of positive options.

Simon is not new to the debunking business. In previous books, and numerous magazine and newspaper articles, he has assailed the limits-to-growth ethos in a number of its manifestations. Readers accustomed to that breezy, Heritage Foundation "Backgrounder" style will find *Consequences* more difficult reading. Almost never, though, will they find it short of evidence.

One by one, with always-ample footnoting and usually-ample explanations of economic models, the myths fall. Among these is the simple notion that immigrants arrived in the U.S. in record numbers in the 1980s. Actually, our immigration levels, as Simon notes from Immigration and Naturalization Service statistics, are relatively low—about 0.2 percent of the U.S. resident population per year, compared to a historical range generally between 0.4 and 1.4 percent per year. And this at a time, as author and scholar Ben Wattenberg has noted, when U.S. and Western birthrates are relatively low, too.

Simon puts the whole range of immigration's effects into needed perspective. Far from sucking up welfare and other social services, he argues, immigrants tend to use them less, and they more than replace their "cost" to the economy with the value of their production, consumption, and tax payments. In 1974, he finds, abstracting from government data, a typical immigrant cohort used $1,400 in services (compared to $2,300 by a typical native) while paying $3,200 in taxes. Data from Israel, Britain, and Canada confirm that immigrants are a net plus: "When looked at as an investment, similar to such social capital as dams and roads," Simon calculates, "an immigrant family is an excellent investment worth somewhere between $15,000 and $20,000 in 1975 dollars."

Similarly, several chapters consider in detail the impact of immigrants on domestic labor markets—concluding again, and again with persuasive evidence, that immigrants generate jobs as much as they "take" them. Immigrants are employed at about the same



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rate as natives, or at slightly higher rates when corrected for demographic peculiarities in the immigrant population. Upon arrival, they earn less than native workers: about 12 percent to 18 percent less for men, 10 percent to 14 percent less for women. (Hence, immigrants can hardly be accused of immediately snatching away the most desirable jobs.) Yet, within a few years, most immigrant groups tend to be out-earning their native counterparts. They tend, according to several studies cited by Simon, to catch up and pass native earnings in ten to fifteen years. (Hence, immigrants are working their way up the ladder—the most spectacular case being that of Asians.)

Nor does *Consequences* confine itself merely to battling the negative (if self-contradictory) conventional wisdom of immigrants as either lazy, service-slurping loafers or wealth-seizing opportunists. Among the book's most important sections are those that consider phenomena usually left out of the debate altogether—such as the generally positive effect immigrants seem to have on economic innovation. Never overstating his case, Simon admits that the scholarly data on this point are wanting. But he does note a 1980 Census Bureau paper by a Mr. T. Sullivan, which found that immigrants were "slightly more likely than the U.S.-born to be employed by their own corporation." Such findings buttress a wealth of anecdotal evidence that immigrants tend to be small-business starters. This is critical, for as numerous studies have now shown, firms with twenty employees or fewer generate somewhere between 51 and 80 percent of the net new jobs in the U.S. economy.

On these points, Simon suffers a bit from the lack of any academic opposition. No fighter looks good against a weak opponent. In Simon's case, there simply isn't a scholarly counterpart to his work for the book to tangle with. (The opposition, and it is powerful, comes from an unusual political coalition of moderate Republican and Democratic politicians, backed by a curious consensus of reporters and editorialists who seem unusually credulous on this issue.) Indeed, several years ago Simon polled top economists, asking, "On balance, what effect has twentieth-century immigration had on the nation's economic growth?" Eighty-nine percent said "very favorable," 19 percent, "slightly favorable," and none answered "slightly unfavorable" or "very unfavorable." Asked what level of immigration would be most favorable to the U.S. standard of living now, 56 percent said "more," 33 percent said "same number," and, again, none said "fewer."

Now, at times, the resulting shadow-boxing goes a bit far. Simon spends some pages discussing the idea of setting up an immigration auction plan—literally selling passage through the golden door to the highest bidders—even though he admits such a plan is not fair, probably not healthy socially, and almost certainly not politically relevant. Also, Simon might have expanded an important appendix that eyes skeptically (if too briefly) the notion that whatever its economic effects, a high flow of immigration promotes racial tensions, political instability, even war.

These matters may be especially important as the immigration question moves to what may be its next political phase. In part, precisely because Simon and others have made an irrefutable case for the generally positive effects of immigration, the move is now on for U.S. policy, in effect, to shop very selectively—letting lots of people in, but searching carefully for persons with the best educational backgrounds, the most capital, even the "right" ethnic characteristics. However understandable such a policy, one wonders whether it would really be healthy for us in the long run—i.e., whether it is really in the "national interest." Like genetic engineering at the cellular level, such efforts to skim the talent crop of other countries for their most desirable people may carry severe unintended consequences for the U.S. economy and our broader social fabric. Anyone who doubts this is invited to take a look at my own file of some of the racialist mailings put out by generally far-right anti-immigrant groups in recent years.

Simon probably should have given more discussion to the very different effects immigration may now have in the U.S. after passage of a 1986 reform bill that makes welfarization, tragically, a greater likelihood for present and future immigrants, while making work harder to come by, and discrimination against aliens more likely. By penalizing firms that hire undocumented aliens, the new law weakens the incentive and ability of immigrants to work. The law also offers social benefits to legalized immigrants and (some services) even to illegals—making it more likely that many Hispanic families will fall into the welfare-dependency trap, as Sharon Brown noted recently in a study of the law's impact for the Alexis de Tocqueville Institution.

Yet to do these things would have diluted, at least a bit, the book's central strengths. One is a reliance on solid, scholarly data, as opposed to the sketchy numbers available on post-reform immigration. The other is a relentless focus on economics, the issue on which the immigration debate—at least the explicit, respectable debate—has centered. □

ENEMIES OF EROS: HOW THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION IS KILLING FAMILY, MARRIAGE, AND SEX AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT

Maggie Gallagher/Bonus Books (Chicago, IL)/283 pp. $18.95

Charlotte Low Allen

As we veterans of checkout-line literary browsing know, the cover of *Cosmopolitan* magazine is its best feature: a streaming-haired goddess in glittery décolletage flanked by columns of teasing headlines. Woe to her who actually picks the copy of *Cosmo* out of the supermarket rack and opens it for a quick look. I had a letdown myself recently when I could not resist—who could?—flipping to a *Cosmo* article titled "How Much Sex Is Enough?"

The article featured a *Cosmo* photographic staple: a meticulously groomed young couple feigning a carnal embrace. She was straddling him, but her real purpose seemed to be to show off the silky piece of lingerie she was wearing. Both were obviously models, not actors, incapable of simulating the slightest passion for each other. The text led off with a detailed first-person account of a wife's efforts to supplement her husband's energetic conjugal endeavors via bathtub contortions that involved redirecting the water faucet. Farther down in the piece, several psychologists opined how everyone has a different level of sexual fulfillment but all levels are equally healthy. This was sex *Cosmo*-style: a medicinal text supplemented by a photo-illustration that could double as an ad for Victoria's Secret.

It is also the sex of the late twentieth century, what remains after we have ripped away its mystery, its danger, its forbiddenness, its capacity to render us completely vulnerable to another, its invocation of the deepest kind of human love, and its connection—once deemed unbreakable—to that most important and sacred of all human activities, the making and nurturing of new life. In our age, whose worst failing is its deliberate and systematic impoverishment of the imagination, we have managed to turn sex into a form of low-impact aerobics.

This is the theme of Maggie Gallagher's new book, *Enemies of Eros*. Miss Gallagher, a former *National Review* editor who lives in Brooklyn with the 6-year-old son she bore out of wedlock right after graduating from Yale, is a friend of mine, and I ought to be embarrassed about touting her book so shamelessly. But tout it I will. Miss Gallagher is flip, witty, and breezy, but she paints a gruesome picture. "America today is one of the most sexually repressed societies in history," she declares right off in a chapter titled "Totem and Taboo in Manhattan."

Sex as a topic of clinical discussion is, of course, vulgarly omnipresent these days, taught in school to tiny tots and pushed by gerontologists onto the

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elderly. Maggie Gallagher is talking about what she calls Eros—what makes sex sexy, that is, important and not trivial. Behind sex lies gender, the crucial differences of body, mind, and temperament that make men not just male but masculine and women not just female but feminine.

Masculinity and femininity are supposed to have generally disappeared in this, the age of Betty Friedan. Nonetheless, we women secretly enjoy the sight of our Neanderthals sprawling brutishly on the couch of a Sunday afternoon cursing at the Super Bowl—they're so cute! And men themselves have been quite unamenable to re-education, their heads turning atavistically when a young thing strolls by, her sexual differences exaggerated by high heels, tumbling curls, and dangling earrings. It is in the sexual act itself, as Miss Gallagher points out, that gender differences are most vividly and satisfyingly dramatized; through uniting with the opposite sex, we confirm our own gender.

In short, we are our bodies, and they are us. But these days, we are obliged to pretend something else: that what we really are is androgynous spirits who happen by chance to be poured into a body that comes in two models, male and female. The female body is generally smaller and smoother, less fleet of foot and strong of arm, and it comes with breasts, but it lives longer. All other differences between the sexes are said to be strictly cultural, the end product of millennia of dread patriarchal repression.

Strangely enough, concomitant with this view of human nature as fundamentally genderless is a thoroughgoing contempt—on the part of both men and women—for all that is feminine. It extends to such "female" occupations as nurse, teacher, secretary, waitress, and nun. It extends to everything connected with the home—such as making a home—and to the bearing and raising of children. It extends most devastatingly to older women, who used to have the dignified roles of mother, grandmother, widow, and eccentric maiden aunt. Now they, like all other women young and old, must have "careers."

High on the list of Miss Gallagher's "enemies" is obviously the feminist revolution. But even more devastating has been the sexual revolution, which is based on the premise that the sexual appetites of men and women are identical and interchangeable. As with the feminist revolution, what this really means is that women ought to behave sexually just as men do (or try to do when women let them get away with it). It goes without saying that the primary beneficiaries of this new attitude have been men, who are now able to persuade nice girls to do what only girls from the other side of the tracks used to do. But the different attitudes the two sexes bring to sex have not changed, which is why, the next morning, the woman wakes up asking herself, "Will he call me?" while the man thinks, "That was great! Now, how can I get out of here?"

For women, sex is tied up with love over the long term because, as Miss Gallagher points out, it is tied up with the bearing of children. Indeed, for women, motherhood may be an even more "erotic" bond than romantic love; "sex that leads to babies is *sexier* than sterile sex" is Miss Gallagher's explanation for why contraceptives seem so often not to work. She cites a Roper poll in which 60 percent of women picked motherhood as the best thing about being a woman today (being a wife came in second, while "taking advantage of women's increased opportunities" rated only fourth). "Romantic love, the erotic longing for union, these are pale reflections of the intimacy that a woman actually experiences holding her baby in her arms," writes Miss Gallagher.

The primary thrust of the cataclysmic social changes of the late twentieth century has been to sever for women this vital link between female sexuality and motherhood. We now take it for granted that pregnancy, unless carefully planned, is an unpleasant "accidental" by-product of intercourse, like syphilis. The fact that abortion—"equalizing" the consequences of conception by killing the offspring that has already bonded with its mother's body—is the only socially acceptable solution for a woman facing an "unwanted" pregnancy is the starkest, most overtly nihilistic manifestation of this trend.

But Miss Gallagher catalogues numerous other ways in which our culture systematically penalizes, degrades, impoverishes, and endangers women who are or want to be mothers: the all-prevalent expectation that a young woman will spend most of her fertile years living with a man or series of men who have no intention of marrying her; "no-fault" divorce, which translates into involuntary divorce for one partner (in most cases the wife) because the other partner (in most cases the husband) needs to "grow" or "find happiness" with someone else; the insistence that women with young children work outside the home, exhausting themselves and neglecting the little ones; and the androgynizing of sex roles around the house, robbing men of their special status as fathers and breadwinners and destroying their incentive to stick around to raise their children.

Guess which sex has won hands down with each of these cultural changes? "Women today are being punished, and the most horrifying part is that we are being punished *for our virtues*, for supplying what everyone wants and what society in fact needs us to provide: a strong, dependable love, an emotional commitment that children can count on," Miss Gallagher writes.

Without a social framework that frowns on women's easy dispensation of sexual favors outside of marriage, that expects marriage itself to last a lifetime, honors the homemaker and mother in the same way it honors the earner of a six-figure income, and severely censures the man who deserts his wife and children, the status of women will continue to fall and the consequences of family breakdown—"feminized" poverty, crime, juvenile delinquency, adolescent depression, and child abuse—will continue to rise.

Miss Gallagher's book naturally castigates the liberal policymakers who wished sexual egalitarianism on the American family and are now calling on us to "finish the revolution" by having even more of the same in the form of "quality" day care, Mr. Moms, and so forth.

But Miss Gallagher also makes clear that libertarian conservatives bear a good deal of the blame. (Few of the CEOs whose second and third wives are the subject of current journalistic interest likely voted for Michael Dukakis.) The classical liberalism to which both L-word liberals and free-marketeers are heirs relentlessly promotes the individual, possessed of many rights but free of all obligations except those taken on by choice. Liberalism's chief boast is that it has transformed relationships that used to be based on status into relationships based strictly on contract, on bargain. The family is, of course, the paradigm of the relationship that cannot and should not be contractualized. (The "Baby M" case, wherein a court banned a baby girl from nursing at her mother's milk-swollen breasts, is a case in point.) The bonds of family are utterly involuntary; it is where, as Miss Gallagher paraphrases Robert Frost, "when you have to go there, they have to take you in."

Maggie Gallagher calls for the restoration of the powerful and proper place of sex as the "desire of one's body for the soul of another human being," the "longing to break the boundaries of the flesh altogether, to incarnate love." That means to restore sex to the marriage bed and to the family. "Sex is a living pathway of connection," she writes, "an intricate web of desire that ends not with orgasm but with children, families, communities, and nations. That ends, in fact, with love." Liberals seem to say that love is unnecessary—that self-interest will suffice. We live now in the lonely world they have made for us: hard on women, hard on children, and hard too, finally, on men. □

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THE MANILA SPECTATOR

CORY DETAILS

by William McGurn

It looked like another coup. For six or seven hours shots sounded left and right, the air was thick with sulphur, and the streets here were full of tires set ablaze. At 2:00 a.m. it was still pitch black, but on a drive through Metro Manila the night was illuminated by explosive bursts everywhere and the flames licking at the curbsides.

In fact, although it looked like Sherman's march to the sea it was far more serious than any mere coup: Filipinos celebrating the New Year. As 1989 wore down the good citizens of Manila simply ran amok, the children setting off Roman candles in the streets and their fathers discharging pistols into the air. I mentioned to my Philippine host that all this was illegal in the States. "It's illegal here, too," he laughed, a fair indication of the difference between the Latin and Anglo-Saxon approaches to the law.

Unfortunately, lawlessness is no joke in the Philippines today, and virtually every middle class shop, hotel, and residence has a uniformed (and armed) guard camped out front. This itself is but a symptom of the Aquino administration's increasing inability just to govern; corruption is as rife as ever, and though Cory herself is clean, she has not been able to rein in either her cabinet or her relatives: Hurrah for the revolution, the snouts have changed but the trough goes on!—another reason no one speaks of the most recent coup attempt as the last.

From a military point of view the bedlam of the New Year's revelry would have made excellent cover for a repeat attempt, but from the Philippine point of view festas come first. Just before the December 1 rebellion, for example, although the capital had been plagued by brownouts due to an electrical shortage, the Christmas lights went up in the streets and no Grinch Carter dared suggest otherwise. Similarly, though 1990 promises no substantive improvement over 1989—even Mrs. Aquino admits that "the economic recovery has restored old fortunes more than it has touched the lives of the vast majority of the poor"—New Year's Eve found every inhabitant in this jumble of concrete, palm trees, and corrugated tin celebrating as though each had just won the Irish Sweepstakes.

Of course, the want of a certain discipline does make itself felt. At Camp Aguinaldo, captured by the mutinous officers in December, the sign by Gate 1 states that the camp is on "Red Alert" and that access is severely restricted. Yet your man in Manila simply strolls through without being asked for so much as a driver's license. It becomes easier to see how Wilma Tiamzon, a captured member of the central committee of the Communist party, escaped on Christmas day after mass—just a year after the chief of the Communist military insurgency escaped from the same place after attending a birthday party for his jailors.

The grounds of Aguinaldo themselves bear more resemblance to an old plantation than the headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. In the middle stands the wreckage of the three-story GHQ building, first shelled during the August '87 coup attempt and shelled again this time 'round even though it was empty. Therein lies a tale, for despite all the sound and fury of the Boxer Rebellion the casualties from this latest coup (113 killed and 581 wounded, mostly civilians) were remarkably low: loyalists and rebels alike tried their best not to hit each other. By contrast, the New Year's revelry left eleven dead and 2,400 wounded, including 100 or so Filipinos who lost a finger or a hand. "We like traffic jams and festas," says the editor of one of Manila's largest dailies. "We're not fighters."

But it would be a mistake to dismiss the coup leaders as clowns. Unlike previous attempts this coup involved the elite sections of the military (the Marines and Scout Rangers) and was led by members of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement, a group of officers who first confronted Marcos about corruption and incompetence in the services back in 1984. At the head of this movement is renegade Col. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, a former aide to Senator Juan Ponce Enrile who continues to elude the government even as he grants interviews to comely reporters from CBS and *Newsweek*. These are the same men who see their own refusal to obey Marcos's orders as saving the People Power revolution and putting Cory in power. In December they showed strategic intelligence and tactical foresight in their taking of Manila's financial district (a move engineered by a 1978 West Point grad, Danny Lim) and two military installations, and though Filipinos overwhelmingly disapproved of their means an astounding 73 percent say that the men's grievances were just. Not lost on the folks here was that the rebel soldiers did not surrender. They went back to the barracks with their guns and ammunition intact, singing regimental ballads and evidently in high spirits.

They might have won, too, had not the U.S. intervened with two Phantom F-4 planes to secure the airspace above Manila, a move more or less supported by the populace here—more, outside Clark Air Base, whence the planes were dispatched. Some sixty-five miles north of Manila in Central Luzon, Clark is a one-company town, bearing the obligatory MacArthur Boulevard and dotted with dives with names like "Earthquake McGoon's" and the "Stardust Hotel." A notice in one such establishment is brief and to the point: "No Condoms, No Escort, No Short-Time."

Over at the Star Wars pub, business is slow and the working gals are lolling about. An informal poll shows most of them approving of George Bush, but they make it clear that their hearts are with the Gipper. They ask why prices are going up and nothing gets done, and their questions reflect the seething popular dissatisfaction with the status quo. "We want the Americans stay in Philippines forever," says 22-year-old Erlynn Canamon. "In America people have nice jobs even if just high school. But we can't find no job so we want Americans to handle things. Better than Philippine government or Communists, right?"

But none of this was allowed to ruin New Year's, and why should it? I suppose there are some who feel that poor people should go around in sackcloths and ashes, which is why the Philippines stands as a reproach to the whole liberal idea that man does indeed live by bread alone. With the most beautiful women in the entire world, abundant reserves of good nature, and a faith that moved Marcos, this country could easily become a paradise of sorts, which it was about a generation ago before the World Bank and Co. got their hands on it and raised the nation's debt from $3 billion then to almost $29 billion today, to the point where the Aquino government is forced to beg for new aid to pay for the old. If there's a New Year's resolution in this, it might be that all this place needs is a little neglect. □

William McGurn is the Washington bureau chief of National Review.

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CORRESPONDENCE
(continued from page 9)

status." "No dishonor attaches to such primary transactions as selling short weight, deceiving anyone about quality, quantity or kinds of goods, cheating at gambling, and bearing false witness." Most shockingly, Arabs "promote and protect their own kind" in business dealings!

From Pryce-Jones's tone of outrage, it sounds as though it has dawned on him that the scarab he bought from the street waif near the Pyramids might not in fact be a genuine Pharaonic relic. "Bearing false witness" is a particularly serious crime under Islamic law, gambling is forbidden in most Arab countries (although surreptitiously practiced as in America), and fraud in business is a problem as it is elsewhere in the world.

Considerations of "face" are important in the Arab business world, as the idiot British doctor whose version of events Pryce-Jones uncritically accepts should have known. I have little doubt that he denounced his administrator at foghorn volume before the assembled staff and was astonished when the man reacted irrationally.

Finally, the use of family connections to improve one's career in business, government, or academe has plagued every society since the dawn of time. If Messrs. Munson and Pryce-Jones have never met a worthless son-in-law who was appointed director of public relations because Big Daddy was CEO, I would be happy to introduce them to a few!

3. In politics, the Arab leader advances through bribery and acts of violence, killing or exiling the current power-holder. He then turns on his co-conspirators, places members of his own family in key positions, and persecutes those who might oppose him. He then looks "beyond his borders for opportunities to mount his next power-challenge," presumably with the saintly state of Israel as a target.

What is distinctly "Arab" about this route for attaining and holding power? How does it differ from political culture in other parts of the Third World? Pryce-Jones's model may have some relevance in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt but is ludicrously irrelevant to the political history of the Gulf states.

One can guess at Pryce-Jones's motives for writing this piece of trash and Munson's for giving it a glowing review. It must be refreshing for Israel's partisans, vexed with the public relations problem of the intifada and the declining value of the Zionist state as a strategic asset, to read that Arabs are subhuman savages who can be beaten and killed without qualms. Mr. Munson in particular will no doubt find it easy to publish more articles in *Commentary*. He might even rise to become the house expert on Arabs and other "untermenschen."

—Robert M. Kelley
Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

Steven C. Munson replies:
Apart from what its crudity and conspiracy-mongering tell us about Mr. Kelley, his letter can fairly be said to exemplify the willful self-delusion with which Westerners have been romanticizing and sentimentalizing the Arabs for many, many years. Particularly among long-time residents of the Arab world—witness the behavior of Western diplomats, for example, or that of oil company executives—the tendency is simply to adopt the outlook of the local government. This means, among other things, engaging in the kinds of rationalizations and falsifications that transform bloody despots into enlightened leaders and primitive customs into quaint traditions, all the while pretending that the values that underlie an often violent, cruel, and degrading way of life can be harmonized with our own. I can think of no better antidote to this kind of wishful thinking than David Pryce-Jones's penetrating, compassionate, and disinterested analysis of Arab life.

Lessons in Democracy
I have to say it again: the most vigorous, sinewy, relevant, humorous writing around is published in *The American Spectator*.

My husband and I usually devour the magazine the minute it arrives (we take turns), so I am sorry to confess that, what with one thing and another, I have just read Micah Morrison's splendid piece, "The Road to Revolt in China," November issue. His superb analysis echoed and corroborated so much in the book *June 4: A Chronicle of the Chinese Democratic Uprising*.

I was particularly interested in Morrison's discussion of the organization and self-government of the Chinese students. Even while it was happening, I marveled at their handling the logistics of the mass meetings and protests. Their ability to govern themselves for seven miraculous weeks flies in the face of all that we have been told by our mentors in TV-land: that the Chinese can't handle democracy, they aren't ready for it, and so on. Their self-government was particularly impressive when compared with the shambles of Woodstock, so beloved of our liberal philosophers.

The book *June 4* contains many interesting documents which I am unable to mention for lack of space. In one of their Hunger Strike directives, for example, the students wrote: "What we [people of China] need is not a perfect savior but a good democratic system. . . . Because at the center of democracy is this equilibrium, we would rather have ten contending devils than one omnipotent angel." They did not learn that hard lesson in any classroom.

—Hazel S. Guyol
Arkadelphia, Arkansas

Watch Your Step
In the fifth paragraph of Dave Shiflett's "Denver Spectator" ("First Impressions," *TAS*, December 1989) there is a possibly misleading sentence. A part of it reads "one of the steps leading to the capitol building rests 5,280 feet above sea level . . ." The words "one of the steps" should be stricken and the words "the sixteenth step" should be inserted in place thereof.

—J. F. Miller
Boston, Massachusetts

Big on Zbig
I'm astonished that the recommended Christmas books in the December *TAS* failed to include Zbigniew Brzezinski's *The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century*, completed in August 1988 and published in 1989.

It's much easier to understand the escalating events of the last few [months] with his analytical perspective of Communism's history. The book includes several charts comparing per capita production of various products by the USSR vs. other nations; these charts reveal starkly how their economic system has failed.

—R. M. Campbell
Cohasset, Massachusetts

Correspondence Update
Having spent many years in publishing (once editorial director of Bantam Books), I was interested in Alex Heard's criticism of Brat-Packery (*TAS*, October 1989) throughout the publishing world and turned to S. W. Mason's clearly angry letter with anticipation (Correspondence, *TAS*, December 1989).

But aside from the fact that he *is* clearly angry, I have not been able to untangle his syntax enough to know what the hell he's saying. If it is a defense of those writers, maybe he would re-write his rage into the monotone, dripping-faucet cadences of his favorite writers and send it back. I'd love to know what he means.

" . . . prepared his baste with a bit too much envy."!!?? Wow.

—Saul David
Van Nuys, California

Nothing Personal
I was introduced to *The American Spectator* by my boyfriend, Bill, as an undergraduate at Johns Hopkins. When each issue would arrive, Bill would devour it in one sitting and then pass it along to his roommate, Steve. Steve took a little longer to get through the issue, but would subsequently pass it along to me. After I read it from cover to cover, the now dog-eared copy would make its way to Rachel, Steve's girlfriend (notice the hierarchy here).

Bill's solitary subscription to *TAS* blossomed into four when we all graduated in 1986 and went on to separate graduate schools. Two of the subscriptions have since merged into one when Steve and Rachel tied the knot last summer. Bill and I will be planning a similar "merger" when I finish my degree and move to his place in Philadelphia this winter. For this reason I will not be renewing my subscription in January. I just wanted you to know the circumstances for my subscription lapse, and not to take it personally.

—Megan Moynahan
Cleveland, Ohio

Kudos
John R. Dunlap's article on "Kiddie Litter" (*TAS*, December 1989) was great. Since I have an 11-year-old son, I particularly enjoyed it and am making copies of it for my son's teacher and other teacher friends.

You might think about making reprints available.

—Tim Fennell
Los Altos, California

Bad Cover
I won't turn a blind eye to the faults of the United Nations. But I also won't turn a blind eye to your December '89 cover, which seems truly tasteless.

The black man holding the spear comes straight out of early twentieth-century racist comic-book iconography. What can you possibly gain by giving such gratuitous offense?

—William Rice
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Author's Query
For a book about the Yellowstone fires of 1988, I would appreciate hearing from anyone with first-hand information, including journals, letters, fire-crew reports, audio and video tapes, personal anecdotes, and any generally illuminating cussedness.

—Micah Morrison
447 7th Ave., 3C
Brooklyn, NY 11215

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CURRENT WISDOM

Vegetarian Times

A report on the University of Maryland's innovative program to bring members of the homeless community in from the streets and allow them to hold forth in an actual classroom:

Only minutes after Colman McCarthy walks into his honors seminar at the University of Maryland, his students fall into a loud and only vaguely organized debate about the rights of animals, or as McCarthy says, "our fellow Earthians, whom we call animals."

It is mid-March, halfway through the semester. The class has already read more material than they ever knew existed on nonviolence. The students are also pretty used to McCarthy's eccentric teaching style, which mainly involves tossing out challenging ideas, then fielding—always with good humor and offbeat wit—the sometimes aggressive responses.

"How many of you had a corpse for lunch today?" he starts out. "What part of an animal did you eat? A leg? A rib? What? Is that too coarse for you?" he asks, responding to their groans. "Words count. I make my living with words, and I like to use them accurately. I never call it meat—that's just a euphemism.

"You know why I avoid dairy products and eggs?" he tosses out later, breaking into the ongoing discussion. "Because they're sexist; it's the females in the barns and henhouses. What do you think of that?"

[July 1989]

Washington Post

Old Faithful, Mary McGrory, beholds the fall of the Berlin Wall and takes yet another occasion to give it to George Bush good and hard:

Why did the leader of the western world look as though he had lost his last friend the day they brought him the news of the fall of the Berlin Wall?

George Bush's stricken expression and lame words about an event that had the rest of mankind quickly singing hosannas were an awful letdown at a high moment in history. . . .

Maybe Bush looked at the jubilant throngs at the wall, some with champagne, some with pickaxes, all joyful, and thought, "And what happens to NATO?" Or, "The military budget will be slashed, and people will start saying Northrop should build subway cars instead of B-2s, and 'Star Wars' is down the drain."

In preparation for the next time something as glorious occurs, Bush may be studying how to be giddy, as the fall of the wall warranted. One of his duties is to reflect the national emotion at an event of staggering significance. Also, he might reflect that the end of the Cold War, which the wall symbolized, can help solve real problems, like the deficit, the homeless, the afflicted and the addicted. He should enjoy.

[November 14, 1989]

San Francisco Chronicle

Scientific speculations of an ovine significance from Miss Anne Perkins, a graduate student at the University of California at Davis whose doctoral dissertation is on "Reproductive Behavior in Rams," and who is here responding to an impassioned question about gay sheep:

"It's very difficult to look at the possibility of lesbian sheep because if you are a female sheep, what you do to solicit sex is stand still. . . . Maybe there is a female sheep out there really wanting another female, but there's just no way for us to know it."

[December 7, 1989]

Washington Post

Another lecture on the failure of American foreign policy from Dr. Richard Cohen, ocassioned this time by the sudden decline of European Communism and the rise of democratic fervor among our erstwhile adversaries. What follows are the idiot's sudorific conclusions:

The fallacy of the domino theory is that it confused nations with individuals and communism with a communicable disease. In some cases, emerging nations were merely reacting to the collapse of old colonial empires—British, French, Portuguese—and asserting their nationalism. The reason the theory has worked in reverse is that in Eastern Europe communism thwarted nationalism and was sustained only by military force. Once that force—mostly the Soviet army—was sidelined by Gorbachev, the dominoes started to fall.

Would that Cold War hawks had recognized that Third World communism, as in Vietnam, was rooted mostly in nationalism. Would that they had distinguished between indigenous movements and those imposed from abroad. Had they done that, they might not be so surprised to see communism triumphant in Vietnam but vanquished in much of Eastern Europe. Adherents to the domino theory were on to something. Dominoes did fall—but not in the direction predicted.

[December 1, 1989]

New York Times

From the pen of Dr. Fidel Castro, a literary sample submittable to the editorial department of the eminent *Nation* magazine and urban terrorist commune.

"If destiny assigns us the role of one day being among the last defenders of socialism in a world in which the Yankee empire has succeeded in embodying Hitler's dream of world domination, we will know how to defend this bulwark to the last drop of blood."

[December 9, 1989]

New York Newsday

Another model sentence from columnist Jimmy Breslin, poet of the bar stool, any bar stool:

Along with the large group who will spring from such as the young men who once were shot by Bernie Goetz, which made everybody feel so elated because we knew we never would have to worry about them again.

[December 14, 1989]

Spinal Cord Injury Life

Proof that the publishing genius of Henry Luce remains vibrant in the land, as displayed in this astonishing notice of a promising new journalistic enterprise:

An effort to link disabled lesbians on a national level has begun with the publication of *Dykes, Disability and Stuff*. The newsletter will be a forum for women with a spectrum of health issues to begin addressing and resolving questions that each one may be handling alone. Regular features will include reports about upcoming legislation, networking among women with similar health concerns, and names and addresses of places within the "movement" that are accessible. Readers are encouraged to submit contributions of art, graphics, news, discussions, and letters, to be sent to DD&S, P.O. Box 6194, Boston, MA 02114. Subscriptions for this start-up quarterly are available on a sliding scale fee from $8-$20+. . . . Braille and tape copies of the premier issue will be available free through and courtesy of the Women's Braille Press, P.O. Box 8745, Minneapolis, MN 55408.

[Fall 1988]

New York Newsday

After braving the pages of "one of the conservative publications," a Mr. Thomas Collins at large on this distinguished op-ed page strikes the proper pose:

For a more clear-cut view of the thinking represented by the Quayle side of Bush, it is best to turn to one of the conservative publications, such as *Commentary* magazine. In the current issue, one writer, Eric Chenoweth, conveys his revelation that Gorbachev "did not set glasnost and perestroika loose on the Soviet population to bring about communism's downfall." Instead, he adopted them "to consolidate power and to save the Communist system and Soviet military domination." Communism, he warns, "will not just fade away. It will take a very long time to decline . . ."

Another writer in the same issue, Charles H. Fairbanks Jr., strikes an even more ominous note. "Communism is not finished as a force in history," he says. "But it is possible to finish it."

It is not clear what he meant by that, and I'm not sure I want to know.

[December 14, 1989]

Washington Times

Churchillian oratory from Mr. Darwin McElderry, a leading public figure in Exline, Iowa, and spokesman for the New Liberalism:

"We just don't have the money to do nothin' and nobody's taking much interest. We haven't hardly got a road that you can get over in with a car down here; no way to get it fixed; just about got to ride a horse. Nobody seems to care about nothin' down here. They could care less about everything. Everybody hollers at you. You can't get nothin' done. There's always a somebody agripin."

[November 10, 1989]

7 Days

An explication of Andres Serrano's recent exhibit at Manhattan's famed Stux Gallery wherein reviewer Margaret Sundell marvels at the noble purpose to which Andres has put his urine and semen—imagine the possibilities open to Andres once he fully comprehends the dirt under his fingernails, the secretions accumulating in his bushy nose hair, his ear wax, his bellybutton lint. Without a bath, the man is a walking Louvre:

Piss Christ is not a pretty title. In fact, it's a downright provocation—an invitation to question religion as it stands. Not, as Jesse Helms and other members of the Moral Majority assume, an attempt to discredit religious faith altogether. Taken out of context, the phrase *piss Christ* fails to convey the respectful, almost reverential, aspect of Serrano's photographs. *Madonna and Child II*, for example, is lit to a hazy, incandescent glow—the beauty of the image disrupted only by a tiny viscous bubble that clings to the infant's cheek. By submerging sacred figures in urine, Serrano does suggest that the body (and its fluids) have been repressed in the name of spiritual transcendence. But considering that the icons are plastic kitsch figurines, his work also argues for a necessary renewal of religion through contact with the human body. Christianity has always been intimately bound up with the psychology of images, and Serrano's photographs (that turn tiny, essentially trivial *Tchotchkes* into monuments of devotion) implicate art-making as much as they do organized religion. Also on view are some of Serrano's nonrepresentational works, which investigate the seductive power of aesthetics, but as it operates in secular art. Using photography's ability to freeze motion and fragment images, the "Ejaculate Trajectory" series transforms the artist's own semen into abstract white streaks set against black backgrounds. With this series, Serrano once again asks the viewer to question what lies behind a tradition we take to be both transcendental and disembodied.

[December 27, 1989]

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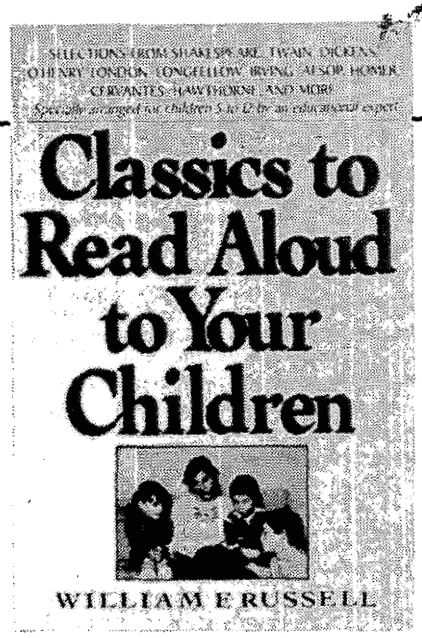
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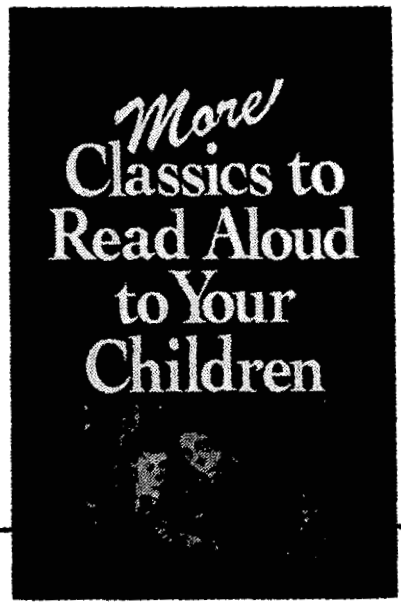

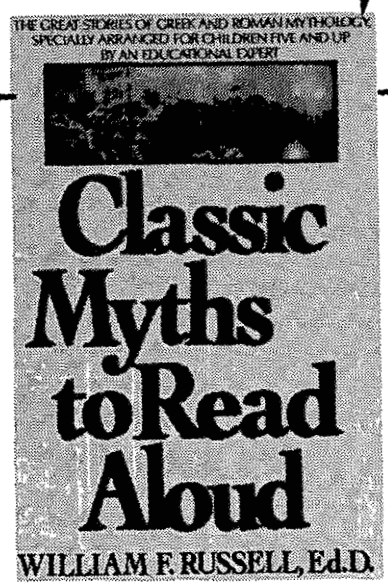
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